

When Fiction Becomes Fact – Chapter 10

A number of the traditional twin-trigger/rabbit-ear models are purchased by those who will never shoot them. Simply hanging a piece of American history on the wall, or inside a display case, is enough for them. In some cases, the guns may be special-edition commemorative models, exquisitely engraved in a custom shop. They are produced in limited numbers to achieve some degree of collector value. **The John Wayne Coach Gun produced by America Remembers is one such outstanding example.**

More than a few of these shotguns serve double duty as home-defense firearms, and they are just as effective in that role today as they were in their heyday. Few criminals argue with a double-barreled shotgun, and those who do usually lose.

Even hunters have taken note of the handy coach gun. Those who hunt grouse and woodcock, and pursue other heavy-cover wing shooting chores have found the short barrels are lightning fast for flushing out birds. Those models available in the hammerless/twin-trigger configuration (especially those offering interchangeable choke tubes) are an excellent choice for upland birds as well as small game. One-ounce loads are comfortable to shoot in the 12 ga. Those looking for less recoil will find some models available in 20 ga. and .410.

And there are plenty of models from which to choose. They aren't made by the legendary companies that produced the originals. Instead, they come from factories in Spain, Italy, Turkey, Brazil, China and elsewhere. But they are precisely machined with modern steels and eminently suited to carry on the coach gun tradition.

The classic twin-trigger/rabbit-ear models are among the most commonly encountered, but there are a number of hammerless/twin-trigger models available. Although single-trigger guns were virtually unheard of on the Western frontier, coach gun models featuring this firing mechanism are offered. Here's a look at the most prominent coach gun models currently on the market.

HUGLU ARMSCO

Two models of the Turkish-made Huglu are available. Both are hammerless designs featuring 20-in. barrels, interchangeable choke tubes (five are supplied with each gun), a Turkish walnut stock and forearm, a raised center rib with a single-bead front sight, a manual sliding-tang safety and case-hardened receivers with polished, blued barrels. These guns are available in either 12 or 20 gauge. The Durango model offers a single trigger, while the Amarillo provides the traditional twin-trigger configuration.

CENTURY ARMS

Four budget-priced models of Chinese manufacture are offered, and each is a traditional exposed-hammer/double-trigger design. All feature 20-in. barrels, a sliding safety, a center rib with a bead front sight and a walnut-stained hardwood stock. They are availa-

ble in 12 and 20 gauge in fixed-choke and full-choke models, as well as .410 in a cylinder choke.

Also available is the Century Arms Centurion Coach Gun model, an upper-level offering manufactured by Kahn in Turkey. Chambered for 12 gauge (3-in. shells) with 20-in. cylinder-choke barrels, a sunken center rib and a brass-bead front sight, it is an exposed-hammer/double-trigger design with Anson & Deeley-style sidelocks, a Turkish walnut stock and polished, blued metalwork.

EUROPEAN AMERICAN ARMORY (EAA)

European American Armory offers three Bounty Hunter coach gun models made by the Russian firm Baikal. And while similar in outward appearance, there are noticeable mechanical differences between them.

Model IZH43 is a hammerless/twin-trigger design featuring 20-in. barrels, a sliding safety and an American walnut stock. It's available in either a blued or nickel receiver. It is offered in 12 gauge (2-3/4-in. chambers) or 20 gauge (3-in. chambers). Either gauge can be had with fixed cylinder chokes or with the MC-3 interchangeable choke-tube system.

Model IZH43K is available only in 12 gauge (2-3/4-in. chambers) with 20-in. barrels in either fixed cylinder chokes or the MC-3 interchangeable system. It features twin triggers along with exposed hammers, which recreate the traditional appearance of the classic coach gun but serve only to cock the internal hammers on the gun.

Model IZH43KH is identical in appearance to the IZH43K, but offers an 18.5-in. barrel. Its exposed hammers are truly functioning hammers—they hit the firing pin instead of just activating an internal set of hammers.

All three guns feature walnut stocks and polished/blued barrels with a center rib and single-bead front sight.

INTERSTATE ARMS CORP. (IAC)

The Chinese-made Model 99W Hammer Coach Gun is an exposed-hammer/twin-trigger 12-gauge with an American walnut stock. The 20-in. barrels are chambered for 2-3/4-in. shells. The 99W features dual safeties – one to block the trigger and one to block the hammer.

STOEGER INDUSTRIES

The Brazilian-made Stoeger coach gun is a hammerless/twin-trigger design with a sliding safety. Available in 12, 20 and .410 (3-in. chambers on all), each features 20-in. barrels with fixed chokes in Improved Cylinder and Modified, and a raised center rib with a

brass single-bead front sight. Models are available in a variety of finishes, including blued steel and walnut, bright nickel with black Brazilian hardwood, and matte nickel. The newly introduced Coach Gun Supreme model features upgraded wood, an effective recoil pad, and is fitted for interchangeable screw-in choke tubes (Improved Cylinder and Modified are supplied with the gun) on the 12- and 20-ga. versions. In addition, a 24-in. barrel version is offered in 12 gauge, and while that departs from the traditional short barrel, it would make an excellent upland bird gun.

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The John Wayne guns were basically copies of the guns in my wooden case. Copies, 'cause I had the real thing. That's good because John Wayne was from Iowa. I test fired them with the ammo I had. They like the Brenneke slugs, the Express Magnum 00 Buck and the #4 Buck. I don't think I'll bother with #9 shot in THESE guns.

None of which has much to do with what was going on topside. With the entire complex connected via tunnels and all tunnels leading to the one the leading to the cavern, I began to suspect that Derek had finally read *Percy's Mission*. He denied it, so I guess not. Given a choice, I'd rather be anywhere than a hole in the ground. I knew that owning Big Jake's Greener's didn't make me John Wayne.

John Wayne was born Marion Robert Morrison in Winterset, Iowa, but his name was changed to Marion Michael Morrison when his parents decided to name their next son Robert. Wayne's family moved to Palmdale, California, and then Glendale, California, in 1911. He was also active as a member of the Order of DeMolay, a youth organization associated with the Freemasons, whom he would also join when he came of age.

By all accounts, Wayne's failure to serve in the military during World War II was the most painful experience of his life. Clearly, there were some other stars who, for various reasons, did not enlist. But Wayne, by virtue of becoming a celluloid war hero in scores of patriotic war films, became the focus of particular disdain from both himself and certain portions of the public, particularly in later years. The rampant patriotism with which he was so identified in the decades to come sprang, it appears, not from hypocrisy, but from guilt. Wayne's third wife, Pilar, wrote, "He would become a 'superpatriot' for the rest of his life trying to atone for staying home." His 100th birthday was May 26, 2007.

- Speaking to his young cavalry lieutenants: "Don't ever apologize – it's a sign of weakness." (She Wore a Yellow Ribbon)
- "Fill your hand, you sonofabitch!" (True Grit)
- "That'll be the day!" (The Searchers)
- "I won't be wronged; I won't be insulted and I won't be laid a hand on. I don't do these things to other people and I require the same from them." (The Shootist)

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The problem with where Youbetcha Ranch was had nothing to do with Little Rock, Springfield or Whiteman AFB. It had all to do with Kansas. Again, check it out. Look at the fallout maps for Arkansas. It also has all to do with the wind direction.

I had maps, I had nearly everything, except patience! It was a good thing that the shooting range connected to the cavern via an underground tunnel. By the time we got out, I was not only a good shot, but had nearly perfected my fast draw. Nearly. Didn't matter, I had a pair of Greener's. Would I really shoot a collector's item? Hey, there probably aren't many collectors left, now. Unfortunately, over the days following the attack, we learned the answers to most of Sharon's questions.

Do you know who hit us? – Russia

Do you know how many hits we took? – No, but the best estimate is several hundred in the first wave.

Did we retaliate? – Osama Obama did, the Russians also hit some Muslim countries.

What with? – Everything they had, whether it worked or not.

Is that bimbo still in charge, or is it the Muslim? – Do you speak Arabic or Farsi? Better pull out that Rosetta Stone course and learn (\$500 per language) quick!

What's left? – Not much.

The battered Pacific Fleet managed to have most of their ships out of port; the Atlantic Fleet was not as lucky, but they managed to save around two thirds of their ships thanks to the task force that was busy steaming around Cape Horn. The Air Force had lost nearly every plane due to EMP, shock damage, or fire. The Marine Corps lost half their forces to the strikes and the balance was embarked with the Navy. The Army was somewhere between the Marines and the Air Force in effectiveness right now; that is to say, mostly useless.

National Command Authority is the military catchphrase for the power resting in the office of the President and the Secretary of Defense. Right now, though, it was really just a polite way to say "impotence". Our duly sworn in successor to the late great Hillary (44th on the History Channel list of successful Presidents – don't ask me how the History Channel managed to keep going during a crisis, but they were still updating their webpage (!) and we caught it through the use of satellite internet uplink) was currently in complete command of NORAD and not much else.

We lost nearly all of our governors, including Beebe from Arkansas. The senior surviving state official was a state representative from Gassville, of all places. I gave him some thought while we were waiting for the radiation to settle down, and tried to call him as soon as my phone had a dial tone.

"Thank you for calling. This is the office of Governor Monty Davenport. Your call is important to us. If you are calling from a touchtone phone, please press 1."

BEEP

“For answers in English, press 1. Para respuestas en español, cuelgue y llama 1-800-328-7448.”

BEEP

“If you need assistance from emergency services, please hang up and dial 911. Help will arrive as soon as it is available. If not, press 1.”

BEEP

“Thank you. Your call will be answered in the order received.”

Instead of elevator music, the emergency broadcast system came on. I listened to around 5 minutes of weather and fallout updates, plus at least half of the list of communities in Arkansas that were not safe to enter. I heard Bull Shoals, Cotter, Flippin, Gasville, and Lakeview before, finally, “Monty Davenport”.

“Sir, this is Sergeant Ott of the 142nd Field Artillery.”

There was a pause while he pulled away from the phone and yelled, “Got one!” then he said, “Sergeant Ott, what is your rank?”

“Sergeant First Class. I’m an Intercept Radar Operator.”

“Got any field experience, Sergeant?”

“Yes, sir. I was a tanker for around a decade before I switched specialties. Been to Korea, Kosovo, and Iraq.”

“Good. You are the first member of your unit to call in so far. That makes you senior.”

“Yes, sir. How many Guard are left?”

“So far, around three dozen small units, mostly squad strength and below. Can you give me a status report?”

“Yes, sir. Current Background Radiation in the Bull Shoals Lake area is 78mR per hour. Still not safe to head outside.”

“How many do you have with you?”

“No soldiers. Around 1,500 civilians in an underground shelter.”

“Equipment?”

“Four tanks, various small arms and explosives. All private property, Sir.”

"Can you hold out until the radiation drops?"

"Yes, sir, we sure can."

"Very well. Stay there. Keep as much of an eye out on those civilians as you can. Report in every day. When you get the thank you prompt, punch in '3113'."

"Wilco, sir."

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP

"Nice to know that we still have some soldiers around. Like I said, you are the senior. Ever want to be an officer?"

"No, sir."

"Good, that's good. You're the Adjutant General for Arkansas now. Congratulations, Major General."

"But..."

"I have to let you go, General. Call tomorrow and I'll try to have the full rollup for you. Dismissed."

I hung up and looked at Dad. "Chit."

I knew that look, the chit only confirmed what I was thinking.

"Made you an officer, didn't he?"

"Yes. He made me..."

"A Lieutenant, right? You have your own tank Platoon and didn't tell him about the artillery, so he made you a Platoon Commander which is a Lieutenant, right?"

"Right on the rank of a Platoon commander. Wrong on him making me a Platoon Commander. Wait, Dad, just wait. He made me the Adjutant General for Arkansas, a Major General."

Mind you, I was still trying to get over the fact that he got through to the Governor at all, let alone the fact that the phones were working. I think I must have had a brief dizzy spell, the next thing I knew, I was being given apple juice, slowly so I didn't choke. It wasn't low blood sugar, it was just too much excitement. Besides, I like my apple juice cold, not warm.

Moreover, just because the phones were working in Arkansas, didn't mean they were working everywhere. I tried to bring up my browser and it couldn't find my homepage which was the provider's homepage. That meant I couldn't send anyone emails. I tried FT's number and got the funny beep you get when the line isn't available. I didn't have Ron or Russ's numbers.

Hmm, do you suppose Glenn Beck made it out of New York and to Utah before the bubble went up? I did my best to keep in touch with Fleataxi and Russ. It was usually an email sent to share something from a new source with Russ and to give Fleataxi a hard time over 'since', too complex sentences and his fiction moving to science fiction to science fantasy. He won, I bought the 590A1, but I'd not buy a Glock. I might take one... for trade goods, but I'm not sure I'd ever buy one. I'd take an H&K USP Tactical in the blink of any eye or even its big brother, the Mk 23 Mod 0. Personal taste, nothing more. Now that I had something to brag about, like that pair of consecutively numbered Greener's fitted to a handmade case.

Without giving too many details, Russ had a place in mind that would serve as a suitable shelter for his whole family and probably enough supplies to ride out the attacks and fallout. I think he said something about a former Civil Defense Shelter. It beat the setup in Palmdale by 50 times over, but was not quite up to Derek's setup. Our third Amigo, Fleataxi should come through it just fine; I mean hell, he had a Glock, a Kel-Tec SU-16 and the Mossberg 590. I wasn't worried about the people who frequented the survival oriented websites, it was the others.

Comparing locations, at least my high capacity magazines were now legal and, thanks to Derek, I had many more. Although I loved that Super Match, it wasn't the M1A that I grabbed first. When it came to grabbing the .50 cal's, you could grab them, but you couldn't move them very fast. Then again, considering their effective range, you didn't need to.

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So my son who hadn't planned on reenlisting was now the Chief and not an Indian. Well, he's still an Indian, let me try that again, he's the Chief Indian. The saying, 'Too many Chief's and not enough Indians' always bothered me because the Chiefs were Indians too.

He kept in touch with the Governor, as required, and got his people to working on building more tanks. There were a plethora of parts. They managed to complete 2 more M1A3s during our waiting period and I got to see a M270, MLRS setup. It wasn't nearly as impressive as the half dozen M109A6E3s. Derek said he didn't have any Excalibur rounds, but he knew where to get some. That made me feel better, I'd get to do some looting after all.

When the fallout fell to acceptable levels for we older folks, we slipped into the Tyvek suits, got our weapons and radiation counters, and checked things out. Accompanied by

3 middle aged single members of the security force, we survey the entire ranch, making extensive notes. We could leave it to the medical staff to sort it out. Medical staff... I know, I forget to tell you about my new crown and the root canal I endured. Typical dentist, I told him to yank them and he insisted on saving them. Then it took 3 more trips to replace missing filings and fix the new ones.

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High on my list were those Arkansas stones, if you couldn't shave with it, it was dull. Derek had someone work over Rambo III, giving me something to shoot for (a goal). He also replaced my wheelchair with a golf cart for use outside the home, giving me 4 forms of transportation: the H1 Alpha, Shelia, the golf cart and the wheelchair.

Unfortunately, Security wouldn't let me out of the gates without approval from higher authority and on Youbetcha Ranch there was only one higher authority. I got tentative approval subject to the mechanical staff making a few 'minor' modifications to the Hummer. I think they used Kevlar and that new bullet proof glass invented by some Australian that resisted the effects of a 5,000lb bomb. No CROWS and no sunroof, meaning if I did run into trouble, we'd have to bail out to respond. I also had company, 3 former Rangers, as a guard detail. As long as they only snickered behind my back I didn't mind.

Now it was my turn, when it came to driving fast and recklessly, Derek and Mary were amateurs, ask Sharon. I had my notes, thank God, and we started looking for the Arkansas stones. It was only after I found them that they laughed and told me there were several sets in the warehouse. OTOH, we could report that everything in this area was intact and, subject to the radiation levels, ready to occupy.

Derek sent scouts out in his version of an uparmored Hummer ala M1114. These were actually M1114s he'd acquired at a government auction and refurbished / upgraded / restored. He used lightweight transparent armor throughout, the stuff the Aussie invented, which had the effect of reducing the vehicle weight and increasing the protection at the same time. The engines were replaced, the transmission rebuilt or replaced and a gun installed consisting of: an Mk19, M2HB, M240, or an M249.

Because Derek favored the FAL, they were standard issue although he had the H&K G-36 for administrative staff. Meanwhile, I took my new golf cart to the shop and had a weapons rack installed, replacing the back seat. I had to endure every kind of insult, albeit behind my back. In the rack, I had a Barrett, a Tac-50, 2 M1As, 2 HKs, a Mossberg, 2 Marlin lever actions and extra spaces for what I forgot. All with pink booties. The Greener coach guns went into scabbards mounted on each side of the golf cart. Under the seat were my spare Colt SAAs and I was still wearing 2 revolvers and 2 pistols, as described earlier. They mounted one of the CM-300s so I could keep in touch and new, more powerful batteries. My cart was the model they call the Humvee, with roll bars.

A bracket held my CD V-715, my Nuke Alert was on my dog tag chain, the small electrical powered cooler held a 12-pak of Coke, a 24-pak of water, 4 12 oz. bottles of MGD

and a bottle of Humalin. A bag held 4 MREs. The mounted first aid kit was actually a standard Combat Lifesavers kit with 5 additional ACS pads. The pack of magazines/ammo held a full extra set of every magazine I used and an assortment of convenience items: assorted 40mm grenades, M61s, M67s, Flash bangs, concussion grenades plus white smoke. Clips on the back of the rifle rack held 5 M72s. Hmm, I wonder how he'd outfit me if I was planning on leaving the ranch besides 3 guards? I'll be honest; I think they may have followed me everywhere, just out of sight. Given the terrain, that was easily done.

We didn't have RFID chips, just dog tags, an Arkansas driver's license or ID card, a Passport (yes, that kind) and the CCW. I also had my NRA and American Legion cards. Those docs at the clinic made certain that all the regular residents of the ranch were 100% up to date on their shots. It took 3 of them to give Sharon a smallpox vaccination. Hee, hee, hee, she got the cowpox.

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I still had no idea who or what was in the Twin Towers, probably Dragon Slayers. The various 'military' equipment was centrally located to allow it to respond to any kind of emergency. And I had 2 Hummers: the H1 Alpha and my Humvee. It must be nice to be rich, but I wouldn't know, the kid had the money, not us. However, with no expenses, and now no social security, the trust could provide enough income – provided there was still a trust. Not that it mattered.

Actually, nothing at the Ranch changed, even after the war. This was because I now believe that Derek more or less had the ranch on a war footing all along. He did stop giving tours, but with the phones mostly down, nobody called anyway. He had crews out checking nearly every square inch of the 6,500 acres and disposing of any remaining fallout.

Using the remaining spare parts, they completed building what would turn out to be 5 tank Platoons, making up a Heavy Company. He said with one more tank, he'd have had 2 Companies, a Battalion. The more I looked around – I now had full access except for the Twin Towers – the more I learned how they spent the money. They acquired worn out 270 systems from the Army and rocket packs from an unnamed source. He had, in essence, duplicated artillery batteries of both Paladins and MLRS. I think Damon may have been involved; he was now our 'rocket scientist'.

Not long after we sounded the all clear, Joe and his family showed up. Yes, Joe from the Rock Island Arsenal. They came by train, of all things, and it was 200 cars long. Derek confided that shortly before TSHTF, he contacted Joe and offered him and his family a place in exchange for 4 flips, but it had to include rocket packs for the MLRS, 155mm rounds and charges including Copperheads and Excalibur rounds and several carloads of 120mm tank munitions.

Unfortunately, the stuff hit the fan earlier than expected and although Joe had the train assembled, he had to wait until after to make the delivery. This time, it was in person. Derek had ended up getting Joe killed in Whetstone and this time, Joe wasn't taking any chances. Don't feel bad, this is how your tax dollars usually work, except for the recipient of the matériel. Most of the time, it's some small country out there that couldn't care less about the US. I mean hell we gave Lebanon matériel back in 2007 not all that long after Israel fought them (I'm equally sure that Israel approved the deal).

The GWT? It will last until we kill every one of those radical Muslims; what are you, nuts? They're still fighting the Crusades for crying out loud. I guess I must just be slow, Fleataxi had it right several years ago, 'Nuke 'em all and let God sort them out.' Of course, you realize that killing them will create more radical Muslims, so maybe FT has a point. I believe in my heart that some folks misunderstand the so called Freedom of Religion. Let's examine that while I think up something else to write about. The language is:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

The 1st Amendment has 6 parts:

1. make no law respecting an establishment of religion
2. or prohibiting the free exercise thereof
3. abridging the freedom of speech
4. or of the press
5. the right of the people peaceably to assemble
6. petition the Government for a redress of grievances

Basically it's a laissez faire policy coupled with a right to complain (in writing). Who makes laws? First, Congress; second, the President using Executive Orders; and third, the Courts by interpreting various behavior in the light of the Constitution. Did not the Courts make indirect laws concerning the practice of religion when they said, "Tear down those Commandments?"

This crap about no prayer in public schools and the elimination of the Pledge of Allegiance because of the word 'God' basically proves my point. God is a title, not a name. The Christian God is named Yahweh (Lord). The Muslim God is named Allah (God). Therefore, my friends, there is nothing religious about it, it's non-denominational. If you disagree, fine, I DON'T CARE! The only religion I care about is that which I practice. It will stay that way until someone tries to shove his/her religion down my throat. Derek is a Southern Baptist, I'm a Methodist, Sharon is a Lutheran, Amy is probably Agnostic. I DON'T CARE! Lorrie probably went to Lutheran Church with Sharon as a child and Damon is probably a non-denominational Christian – I don't know and, I DON'T CARE!

Bimbo #1 was Episcopal and married to a Catholic and Bimbo #2 was a Catholic who knew less about her faith than I did.

When Fiction Becomes Fact – Chapter 11

That's what Freedom of Religion is all about, the I DON'T CARE PART. I'm not going to discuss the other provisions, because I don't want to, ok? I'm free to shut up any time I want to. What I believe is NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, unless I ask you to believe what I do. Yahweh wasn't stupid (a plug for Intelligent Design).

Elohim – means 'God'

Yahweh – means 'Lord'

'Allah' – means 'God'

We Christians have about 1,500 different ways of looking at the subject of religion and we call them denominations. And mine ain't no better than yours and vice versa.

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If you're going to break a few laws, you might just as well 'Go For Broke'. It got them a lot of medals and most of them dead. If you don't know what I'm talking about, I'm sorry for you.

Being an Iowa boy who lived about half his life in Iowa and the other half in the PRK, I didn't really have the lay of the land down in Arkansas. I heard someone mention a clan, but didn't give it much thought at the time. Iowa boy? Well, no one gets to choose where they're born, do they? I was a rare commodity, a California native who was raised in Iowa instead of the other way around. My home of record when I was in the Air Force was Charles City, so guess I was claiming to be an Iowan.

They weren't talking about a clan, but The Klan. I didn't know at the time that that the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, headed by National Director Pastor Thom Robb, were based in Zinc, Arkansas. It claimed to be biggest Klan organization in America today. It refers to itself as the "sixth era Klan" and continues to be a racist group. Oh, them, you say. Yep, it was surprising, to say the least, especially after meeting Joe.

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I got quite a surprise when I saw the convoy pulling in. "Hey, guys, we got inbound contact."

"Thanks, sir, but we're expecting it. That should be Joe's group."

"Oh? Thanks for telling me before they showed up, fellas. Who do you work for, anyway?"

"With all due respect, not you sir."

The convoy reminded me of something. Back in the 60's when they forcibly integrated the schools in Little Rock using the National Guard, I think. The only difference was that instead of a bunch of Caucasians escorting a small group of African Americans we had a convoy entirely manned by folks with a deep, permanent tan. The lead truck pulled to a stop before they reached the gate and a very dark gentleman got out. "Hello the ranch!" he yelled.

"Hello yourself," I yelled back. "What do you want?"

"I'm Joe from Rock Island. You must be Gary. You look exactly the way I imagined." He offered his hand. I took it and felt the sort of controlled grip of someone who knows that they can crush your bones but don't.

"Hi, Joe. You don't look anything like I expected, but Derek didn't tell me what to expect. These folks with you your people?"

"Mostly. Some are friends from Rock Island. I hope that Spence is OK with that."

"I'm sure that he can find work for them if they are willing. Sorry if I seem a little chagrined. Like I said, Derek didn't tell me that you were..."

"Black? Gary, it never seemed to matter a bit to him anyway so long as we didn't try to prove it by acting blacker than we were."

"Really? Gee, I guess he learned something from his parents after all."

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Joe turned out to be about as normal a guy as you could ever hope for. He and I had similar tastes in music (ok, so Smokey Robinson isn't exactly my favorite, but he hated rap more than I did). He also had a thing for good old fashioned coffee in the morning. Derek offered to meet over coffee the next day, and Joe said only if it was strong and black like him. It took me a minute to get done choking before I could accept Derek's offer.

The three of us were sitting in Derek's sunroom the next morning. The walls of this miniature greenhouse looked out on the front gate, where those two towers stood. We could see nothing of the main complex from here, though. I think that it was deliberately built that way but I couldn't prove it. It wasn't anything tangible; it was just a feeling I had that he liked to spend some time unwinding when he sat in here.

"You get everyone settled in, Joe?" Derek asked.

"Yeah. Thanks for the nice digs. It's almost like the place we left back up in Davenport," Joe replied.

“I used to live there, back in the seventies and early eighties,” I said. Derek and Joe looked at me and blinked, like they didn’t expect me to say that.

“The supplies you brought in will definitely come in handy,” said Derek, turning back to Joe.

“You’re welcome, General,” Joe said.

“Can I ask a question?” I wondered out loud.

“Ask away, Dad,” said Derek.

“Joe, now don’t get offended, but I heard you call yourself black,” I began.

“Yes, sir. It’s because I am black,” said Joe.

“I noticed. I just don’t remember the last time I heard an African-American call himself black,” I said.

“Well, Gary, you’ve heard it now. I never lived in Africa, so as far as I’m concerned it’s stupid to use two long words in place of one short word. I don’t let it bother me that I’m black, so I hope that it doesn’t bother you.” Joe sipped his coffee calmly.

“Hey, I have two grandkids that are only a couple of shades lighter than you.”

“Does that bother you?” Joe asked.

“Not that they are black, but that they don’t want to behave themselves most of the time.” I said.

“So then they’re normal kids, right?”

“Yeah. Half energizer bunny and half question, with a volume knob that’s broken off at the base.”

Derek laughed. “Too true, Dad, but that explains all of your grandkids.”

I noticed a couple of pick-ups coming down the road about that time. “You expecting more guests, Derek?”

Derek followed my gaze. “Nope. Let’s go meet them.”

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I had one of the Greener's held low, Derek had his hand on his Thompson, and Joe had a Remington 870 with about 4 inches of barrel past the slide left resting across his shoulder when we walked up to the truckload of Bubbas stopped at the gate.

"Can I help you?" Derek asked.

"That your nigger there?" said the lead Bubba.

"That's my friend, and I don't think that he likes that word," Derek said evenly.

"As a matter of fact, I don't," Joe said calmly.

"Keep yer mouth shut, boy, afore I shut 'er for yeh," growled one of the Bubbas in the back. The driver held up a hand, and he fell silent.

"I'm Pastor Thom Robb, and I'm here to help save your immortal soul," said the driver.

"Well, thanks kindly Brother Thom, but my immortal soul is doing just fine right now," said Derek.

"Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing. Deuteronomy, Chapter 7, verse 26," said Robb.

"And he said unto them, we know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.' Acts 10:28." said Joe.

"You should leave now, Brother Thom. While you can," said Derek. His face had completely drained of color and his eyes were icy blue, a sure sign of how angry he was despite his calm words.

"Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, everyone in his business," said Robb, motioning to the men in the back of the pickup. Quick as lightning, they all had rifles and shotguns pointed at us.

Derek didn't even gesture. He just smiled as the ominous double-cocking of machine guns sounded from the towers. Pastor Thom Robb turned as pale as Derek, but his was the paleness of fear.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Matthew 6:12. I forgive you, Brother Thom, but you should turn your trucks around and head back to Zinc so that you can check your bible references better. Besides, the men behind those guns up there in those towers don't believe in forgiveness."

Derek's words hung in the air until the pickups had stopped throwing up dust trying to turn around as quick as they could. I started coughing for a minute because of the dust, making Joe pat me on the back and ask if I was OK.

"I'm fine," I rasped.

"You know, I believe that the Welcome Wagon needs to improve the kind of people they use in this area. It's enough to make you think that you aren't welcome here, Joe," Derek said. Joe laughed with him.

"Ithil, Anor, stand down. Good work, you two," yelled Derek.

"Machine guns up there, son?" I asked.

"Mother Deuce settles a lot of arguments, doesn't she?" laughed Derek.

o

Major General? Got me to wondering about Generals. Speaking only of Generals, a Lieutenant outranks a Major and a plain General outranks them both. Try telling some Major a Lieutenant outranks him. Major/Lt. Commander is a mostly useless rank in some of the services; lesser so in the Navy. It's mostly a staff position, at least originally; can you understand, 'General's Aide'?

What is the principal duty of people in survival stories? To survive, of course. It's a whole hell of a lot easier if you're prepared. Chance favors the prepared mind (Travis Dane quoting Louis Pasteur), didn't you just love his little speech?

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. This is your captor speaking. There's been a slight change in your travel plans tonight. You have, you will note, been moved to the last two cars of the train for your own well-being. First, I'd like to call your attention to the highly trained men with the automatic weapons in your cars. In the event of an emergency, they may be called upon to shoot you. Your safety IS our primary concern. However, if you try anything stupid, Federal Regulations require that I kill you. So please, no hero crap!

I tried to find a definition of hero crap in the dictionary. The best I could come up with was this:

Today, far, far too infrequently, we are presented with a person who actually BELIEVES in something that is for the benefit of all mankind.

I think that part of the problem that we have is the heroes we select for ourselves and our societies. I believe that this is what sets the American Society in a unique niche in the world. If you are looking for a people that will literally bend on every rule that can be interpreted, the United States of America is the answer. Unfortunately, there are many

more countries in this world that will ONLY bend when presented with the "more traditional" behind the scenes political decision making – money. Where America can decide to stand on one principle or another, we mostly decide to do this to the wrong extreme or even when the achieving of the ultimate goal will be detrimental to the overall well-being of our society.

So, instead of the George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, or John Adams (Hell, don't forget Benjamin Franklin) type heroes of the American Founder's generation; or the "righteous" heroes such as Superman, King Arthur, or even the many religious deities that represent the different facets of the human experience. These days, our heroes don't need to stand for more honest or pure defining characteristics; they simply must not get caught doing them. I find this terribly unfortunate and would go further and say this will be our ultimate demise.

There are people around the world that recognize the American view of the world as exceptionally closed-minded and ridiculously self-absorbed. Of course, as an American, I must completely and totally agree with them. It's not our fault though; those of us in America, who actually WANT to know what's going on, must search relentlessly for it. We are only completing the cycle we have been told to follow... grow, work, pay taxes, and die. Those of us who don't follow these simple rules... or at least the ones where we know they are there and choose not to... are persecuted and called "instigators".

Even Bush has been wondering where the leaders of the Iraqi people are hiding... has anyone ever considered that maybe they just don't give a poop what anyone thinks about them except those who actually understand what they are going through... WHAT A STRANGE IDEA!

My only request is that anyone reading this consider who THEY consider a hero, and more especially, "WHY?"... please think about this, our species' survival depends upon it. (I failed to note the source)

o

Disappointing, isn't it? Most of my heroes are dead. George Patton, Chesty Puller, Karl Malden, I mean, Omar Bradley. Bradley wasn't arrogant, Patton was, and admitted it. So was Monty, but he wouldn't admit it. Rommel was a good General but his boss, Hitler wasn't, so he was basically hamstrung. Would Monty have beaten Rommel without our help and the help of the British Air Force and Hitler? Maybe not. The advantage of watching the History Channel was that we not only found out who won the war, but why. In a word, Logistics. If the British Air Force hadn't sunk the ships bringing Rommel supplies, then what? If the German's had enough supplies during the Battle of the Bulge, would Patton's response meant as much? What idiot put General Westmoreland in charge of the American effort in Vietnam? Ok, I believe you have the picture.

o

WW III was apparently over and for some reason my Noncom son is now in charge of the entire Arkansas National Guard but not the Arkansas State Defense Force because they didn't have one. I'd say going from E-7 to O-8 is a pretty big jump, one level plus a change in letters. They probably have a lot of Bubbas, does that count? Most guys named Bubba are either as big as Paul Bunyan or have a gun or both. The female equivalent of Bubba is Sissy. I'm a Yankee, but I don't understand why it always seems to come out Damn Yankee, I wasn't ever born when the Civil War happened. If those Reb's were so Sierra Hotel, why did they lose? I kept my mouth shut, best not to start something I couldn't finish.

About the only thing we were now missing was Air Power. Going back to the terrain, something that could provide the overview needed, had to get above the ground. Lacking a runway, that meant some kind of helicopter or vertical takeoff aircraft. Have you ever priced a Harrier jump jet? Unless Governor Davenport let loose of some of one or both, the sole aircraft available was APPARENTLY a refurbished old chopper aka HU-1 Iroquois (Huey). There were a few around including the one my son bought. It had been worked over by an aviation mechanic who knew his stuff. Its role on the ranch had been transportation to any of the communities within its range. According to a Sept. 21, 2004 Army News story, fewer than 150 Huey's were flying Army wide by the end of September 2004, including 60 that belonged to the National Guard. The story also reported that an additional 270 UH-1 were waiting for final disposition at an aviation maintenance facility in Temple, Texas.

During the down time waiting to leave the shelter, it had been modified for door gunner mounts using, once again, available parts. Derek hadn't heard from Joe the when the Huey was set up to use M240s or, should they be available, M134 GE Mini-guns. The 5.56 micro-gun was a short lived project that probably fired more ammo in *Predator* than in testing.

The micro-gun project produced something they called the Six-Pack. It weighed 85 pounds and would take someone a big as the Governor of Minnesota to carry one. I doubt anyone could handle the recoil.

That Twin Huey Derek had was rebuilt using new motors, new hydraulics, new avionics, etc. It more or less was like the Marine Corps upgrade package. The GE mini-gun M134, is aka the GAU-17. The GAU-17/A utilized on the UH-1N, H-3, and H-60 aircraft, is a crew served, electrically driven, 6 barreled, rotary action, percussion fired weapon, with a maximum rate of fire of 6000 rounds per minute. In the current crew served application the rate of fire is selectable at either 2000 or 4000 rounds per minute. In the UH-1N DAS configuration the gun can be fixed forward and remotely fired by the pilot. The components that make up the GAU-17/A gun system consist of a gun control assembly with electrical cables, gun drive motor, a MAU-201/A or a MAU-56 delinking feeder, flexible ammunition feed chutes and an ammunition storage system. The ammunition storage system has a capacity of 4000 rounds of linked 7.62mm percussion primed ammunition.

The guns Derek had were Dillon Aerospace "M134D". Because the Corps usually ends up with hand-me-downs and because the Corps only goes with proven systems, you shouldn't count out the Vietnam era equipment, just yet. I think that my son would have been better served if he'd pick up a Cobra to go with his Huey. Or, is there something else that he isn't telling me? How far can you stretch a quarter billion? Well, if you bought gold at a market low and sold some of it at a market high, a very long way. Especially if you cheated the tax man. Remember, Derek is the one with the 168 IQ. Does the name Thomas Austin "Amarillo Slim" Preston, Jr. mean anything to you? He won more than once, and is an Arkansas native. Of course, he lives in Amarillo, now. Is it skill or was he just born lucky? Yep, until he died.

It wasn't a yes or no question, therefore 'yep' must mean both. Some people have all the luck! I used to claim having bad luck beat having no luck at all. Now, I'm not so sure, having experienced a run of bad luck in the early and mid-portion of the first decade of the 21st century. The Bible says something to the effect, 'As ye sow, so also shall ye reap'. Translation, payback is a bitch. However, I have a loving God and more importantly, at the moment, a loving son. I may or may not be able to explain my actions at the Pearly Gates; it may depend on my memory. Were I Muslim, the virgins would all be Nuns with shotguns.

I generally try to give the source of my material/inspiration, thus all the links. However, it was me who went there in the first place, remember that. While I was out surveying the ranch (probably with 3 companions), my youngest son must have broken the password on my computer and added some material to this tale, thus explaining slight differences in writing style.

Naval Aviators usually smoke a cigar after a successful mission if 'Independence Day' is to be believed. Don't know about soldiers, maybe an ice cold MGD. I left them alone, I no longer like to drink alone. However, once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic, so I'll have to watch it, very, very closely. I know for a fact that Sharon will... My brand of cigarettes is Kool super longs. I do like cigars. I usually smoked Dutch Master Presidents or Marsh Wheeling's. If they were good enough for Bret Maverick, they're good enough for me. I also liked Churchill's, usually seconds. Due to a dutiful son, I'd never run out of smoking materials, just places to smoke. They don't sell Cuban cigars and their prices are reasonable.

o

QUTBISM: AN IDEOLOGY OF ISLAMIC-FASCISM

"Sun Tzu wisely said, 'Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.' Our success in the War on Terrorism depends on knowing who the enemy is and understanding his ideology. While characterizing and labeling an enemy may serve such a purpose, it is only useful if the labels are clearly defined and understood. Otherwise, overly broad characterizations obscure our ability to truly 'know the enemy,' they diffuse efforts, and place potential allies and neutrals in the enemy's camp.

Unfortunately, the War on Terrorism's use of labels contributes a great deal to the misunderstandings associated with the latter. The fact is, five years after 9/11 the NMSP-WOT provides little specific guidance, other than labeling the enemy as extremist. This inability to focus on the specific threat and its supporting philosophy reflects our own rigid adherence to political correctness and is being exploited by militant Islamists portraying these overly broad descriptions."

That was written before we lost, yet another, war. Because I've already talked extensively about 4th Generation War, and shared the David and Goliath examples, I won't repeat them here. Suffice it to say that any future war would be 4th, if not 5th, Generation warfare. Personally, I think our best bet in the future would be to fight a very good 3rd generation war, especially locally.

If I seem to be wandering aimlessly, I was. Youbetcha Ranch was a big place with many mysteries. When I was forced to go horseback, I stuck a Marlin Cowboy in the scabbard and carried one Greener across my lap. Shelia was day and night different from Salina. I probably wouldn't have need the seat belt, let alone a 0/0 ejection seat, but better safe than sorry.

The wranglers would pack a horse for me so I could camp out overnight should I choose. I didn't usually, too much work. However, there were a few prepared campsites if I wanted to use one and they had water, split and stacked wood and usually a small cabin stocked with a few essentials.

That included everything except Bimbo #3. What is the expression? You can take the wanderlust... No, it must be something else, I'll think on it. If I do run into her, I'll have to go into the shop for a tune up first and try to get everything to work again. You CAN blame that on the diabetes.

*He took a hundred pounds of clay
And then He said Hey, listen
I'm gonna fix this-a world today
Because I know what's missin
Then He rolled his big sleeves up
And a brand-new world began
He created a woman and-a lots of lovin for a man
Whoa-oh-oh, yes he did*

*With just a hundred pounds of clay
He made my life worth livin
And I will thank Him every day
For every kiss you're givin
And I'll thank Him every night
For the arms that are holdin me tight
And He did it all with just a hundred pounds of clay*

Yes he did, whoa-oh, yes He did

*Now can'tcha just see Him a-walkin round and round
Pickin the clay uppa off the ground?
Doin just what He should do
To make a livin dream like you*

*He rolled His big sleeves up
And a brand-new world began
He created a woman and-a lots of lovin for a man
Whoa-oh-oh, yes he did
With just a hundred pounds of clay*

FADE

*People, let me tall ya what He did
With just a hundred pounds of clay*
©Gene McDaniels, 1961

Funny, I thought she came from Adam's Rib. Or, was that a barbeque joint in Chicago? You kids should watch the old episodes of M*A*S*H more. I saw the very first episode, when it aired.

*She was standing there, so beyond compare, in Spanish lace
My heart touched the sky, captivated by her angel face
Dancing neath the moon I soon discovered the new world that lovers always
find When I saw her there, so beyond compare, in Spanish lace*

*We danced away the night, until the morning light said Time to go
I knew we'd have to part, but sadness filled my heart, I loved her so And
now that love has flown, alone, I think of the heartaches that I will have
to face Dreaming of that night, the stars that shone so bright, and
Spanish lace*

*And now that love has flown, alone, I think of the heartaches that I will
have to face Dreaming of that night, and stars that shone so bright, and
Spanish lace*

Dreaming of that night, and stars that shone so bright, and Spanish lace

Dreaming of that night, and stars that shone so bright, and Spanish lace
©Gene McDaniels, 1963

When Fiction Becomes Fact – Chapter 12

Not what you expected? I DON'T CARE. Read something else, then. Go read a zombie story on a Patriot Fiction website, if you can still find one up.

*Blue Spanish eyes, tear drops are falling from your Spanish eyes
Please, please don't cry, this is just "adios" and not "goodbye"
Soon I'll return bringing you all the love your heart can hold
Please say "Sí, sí", say you and your Spanish eyes will wait for me*

*Blue Spanish eyes, prettiest eyes in all of Mexico
True Spanish eyes, please smile for me once more before I go
Soon I'll return bringing you all the love your heart can hold
Please say "Sí, sí", say you and your Spanish eyes will wait for me*

You and your Spanish eyes will wait for me

Several singers recorded "Spanish Eyes." The original performer was Bert Kaempfert in 1965. The German singer was out done by two more well-known artists: Englebert Humperdinck and Wayne Newton. However, the only version to top the 40 charts was the 1966 recording by Al Martino, a bonafide Spanish singer. Marty Robbins only performed it once, at a concert.

Bert made many singers famous. I liked his 'Wonderland by Night'. I like instrumental music. Is there one recording, above all others, that you like? Only one, now, not two or three. For me, it was recorded by Jørgen Ingmann, originally a jazz guitarist from Denmark. He produced a cover version of Apache that, billed to Jørgen Ingmann & His Guitar, made it to number 2 on the US pop chart in 1961, thereby preventing the Shadows' original from charting there. Wait while I dry my eyes.

o

You know about religious crackpots, I assume? There were several; 3 come to mind, Jim Jones, David Koresh and John *****. I can't give a full name, I'd get banned everywhere. OTOH, I DON'T CARE. Oh, did the light just come on? This single work is my protest piece. If one is really a Patriot, then one believes in FREEDOM OF RELIGION. If one doesn't, then he/she cannot be, by definition, a Patriot. One can be many things, in that case, but not a Patriot. What the hell, let it all hang out... Better to unload resentments than lug them around, they're heavy.

I, (insert name here), do solemnly swear, (or affirm), that I will support and defend the **Constitution of the United States** against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God. (Note that the last sentence is not required to be said if the speaker has a personal or moral objection)

Any honest Patriot could take that oath. I did once and so did both of my boys. We generally agree that once taken, it was not to be forsaken. Because we believe in FREEDOM OF RELIGION, we don't require the inclusion of 'So help me God.' To do so, would be cross-purpose. However, since God is the title, I included it when I took mine. I'm sure both boys did too. Another light?

I told you earlier that I wore 4 handguns. But what about the other Colt handguns? I had two, a 3" and a 5½". The one with the 5½" barrel was in my gun belt called 'Big Jake'. The Sheriff's model in a shoulder holster called Gambler. Yes, I know, but I'm 5'4 and he was 6'4½.

John Wayne's enduring status as an iconic American was formally recognized by the US Congress on May 26, 1979 when he was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. Numerous actors, including Elizabeth Taylor, and politicians testified to Congress of the merit and deservedness of this award, most notably Maureen O'Hara, who requested the words that would be placed onto the medal: "It is my great honor to be here. I beg you to strike a medal for Duke, to order the President to strike it. And I feel that the medal should say just one thing, 'John Wayne, American.'" Robert Mitchum notably declined to write a testimony. The medal crafted by the US Mint has on one side John Wayne riding on horseback and the other side has a portrait of Wayne with the words, "John Wayne, American." This Congressional Gold Medal was presented to the family of John Wayne in a ceremony held on March 6, 1980 at the US Capitol. This medal is now at the John Wayne Museum in Winterset, Iowa. Copies were made, and the public made it a best-seller.

The American Film Institute defines an American screen legend as “an actor or a team of actors with a significant screen presence in American feature-length films whose screen debut occurred in or before 1950, or whose screen debut occurred after 1950 but whose death has marked a completed body of work.”

Male:

1. Humphrey Bogart
2. Cary Grant
3. James Stewart
4. Marlon Brando
5. Fred Astaire
6. Henry Fonda
7. Clark Gable
8. James Cagney
9. Spencer Tracy
10. Charlie Chaplin
11. Gary Cooper
12. Gregory Peck
13. John Wayne

14. Laurence Olivier
15. Gene Kelly
16. Orson Welles
17. Kirk Douglas
18. James Dean
19. Burt Lancaster
20. The Marx Brothers
21. Buster Keaton
22. Sidney Poitier
23. Robert Mitchum
24. Edward G. Robinson
25. William Holden

Female:

1. Katharine Hepburn
2. Bette Davis
3. Audrey Hepburn
4. Ingrid Bergman
5. Greta Garbo
6. Marilyn Monroe
7. Elizabeth Taylor
8. Judy Garland
9. Marlene Dietrich
10. Joan Crawford
11. Barbara Stanwyck
12. Claudette Colbert
13. Grace Kelly
14. Ginger Rogers
15. Mae West
16. Vivien Leigh
17. Lillian Gish
18. Shirley Temple
19. Rita Hayworth
20. Lauren Bacall
21. Sophia Loren
22. Jean Harlow
23. Carole Lombard
24. Mary Pickford
25. Ava Gardner

I've have shown my readers my favorite holsters over the years, but will always come back to the Laredoan Cross Draw. It's more of a practical matter, my left hand is 70% numb. Let's face it, without the Knight, the Paladin holster is nothing special. Even with it, there was only one Richard Boone. Referring to the list of male actors, they could

have left #4 off. On the female list, I wouldn't miss #2 or #10. There are several names I would add to both lists.

So, was DC the Capital or the Capitol? The answer: a Capital is a city and a Capitol is a building. Probably screwed that up in several stories, but not this one. Funny, I'd have thought Randolph Scott would have been number 3. During the Thirties, he was roommates with Cary Grant in a beach house known jocularly as Bachelor Hall. The close friendship between Scott and Grant, as well as the steady stream of women into and out of Bachelor Hall, have fed rumor mills for years. From 1933 onwards, Grant occasionally shared a house with Scott. There were many rumors about their relationship. Scott often referred to himself, jokingly, as Grant's wife. Many studio heads threatened not to employ them unless they lived separately. Scott was married 2 times, over 40 years to the same woman; Grant 5 times, but never to his love, Sophia Loren. I'm sure many of us have heard the quote, "Two aging queens..." Believe what you want, I DON'T CARE.

o

About the music I like. Some of those protest songs from the '60s are high on my list because I like the music, not the message. If you don't know that about me by now, it's not my fault. I liked Peter, Paul and Mary. They could protest all they wanted, as long as they kept singing. Lessons learned hard are lessons learned well, take my word for it or find out on your own. Guess what, I DON'T CARE. I'm sure that Wartburg College is discussing Iraq, provided they still have a class called, "The Great Issues". Only thing lacking is me in the class supporting the firebombing of Dresden.

Among the country's comprehensive colleges, US News & World Report's 2007 edition of America's Best Colleges ranks Wartburg:

#1 in Iowa

#6 in the Midwest

#10 in the US

#2 in Midwest for "Great Schools at Great Prices" (4 of the top 10 are in Iowa)

BTW, Drake is #7 on the list of Universities-Master's (Midwest): Best Values and it's the only one from Iowa. I didn't pick either college I graduated from, my brother did.

o

I went through a series of titles for this story. I started with The Big Lie, that Hitler thing. A few yards down the path, I was shanghaied and ended up in Arkansas. I messed around with some other titles until I landed on this title. It's more accurate, but not what I want. Don't suggest, 'Another Line of BS', I already rejected that. Remember, this is my protest peace. When I figure out what I'm protesting, I'll let you know.

I liked Joe because he didn't pretend to be anything that he wasn't. Perhaps a slightly different perspective, I could appreciate that. It's not easy for anyone, regardless of

race, creed, religion or circumstance. This was a mess of a mess, I had assumed the equipment that Derek built and accumulated would be solely for our use. Another case of assuming facts not in evidence. The Army wouldn't build an M1A3, so he did, 20 times. He couldn't buy the M270 MLRS, so he did the next best thing, bought the cast off junk and rebuilt it.

I knew where the M109A6E3s came from, he was storing those. I do know they didn't come with more than a couple rounds of ammo each and he had to get ammo from Joe. He had more than a few unkind words to say about those Field Artillery Ammunition Supply Vehicles. Artillery guys probably understand, I'm not sure I do. About the only thing I am sure of is that we're not in Palmdale anymore. I can tell because the ground here isn't flat.

I'd used the tick...tick...tock literary device in at least one story. However, even back in Palmdale, we heard the first tick. It occurred on November 4, 2008, the day the Republic died. Being an ardent gun lover, I was concentrating so hard on sticking my tongue out at the law that I failed to notice the signs I'd been watching for since 2004.

Even before, there were those hate crimes we all read about, like this one:

A Queens' high school student was charged with hate crimes Friday for violating a Sikh student's religious beliefs by forcing him to remove his turban and cutting his hair, the Queens district attorney said.

"The defendant is not accused of some schoolhouse prank, but an attack on the fundamental beliefs of his victim's religion and his freedom to worship freely," Queens District Attorney Richard Brown said in a prepared statement.

Umair Ahmed, 17, of 42-49 77th St., was arrested in the Thursday attack in a bathroom at Newtown High School in Elmhurst.

Ahmed and another student allegedly forced the 15-year-old victim into the bathroom, and after threatening him forced the boy to remove his dastar, a traditional Sikh turban....

Ahmed used scissors to cut off his victim's waist-long hair, then threw it in a toilet and on the floor, according to a spokesman for the district attorney. Cutting a Sikh's hair is contrary to the Sikh faith, which considers hair a gift from God that should never be cut.

Ahmed was charged with second-degree unlawful imprisonment as a hate crime, second-degree menacing as a hate crime, second-degree aggravated harassment, second-degree harassment and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon. He faces up to seven years in prison.

The victim told officials that he only went into the bathroom and took off his dastar because he feared that Ahmed would stab him....

The boy said it was against his religion, but Ahmed showed him a ring and said, "This ring is Allah. If you don't let me cut your hair, I will punch you with this ring."

The same thing happened at Iowa State University, except it was a Vietnam War protestor and all he got was a haircut and a shave. That didn't really make much sense and when I read it, I ignored it. Hate crimes are not things one should ignore. They're symptomatic of a much worse problem. However, by mid-2007, the country was filled with or filling with hate. We had a few boatloads of Muslims, invasion across our southern border, suspected terrorists in our midst and Congress was more interested in making political points than serving its constituents. They were forced to cave in on war funding – but only until September when they brought it up again.

Seeing support in our Congress, the radical Muslims in Iraq and elsewhere increased the pressure. I was so busy saying, it's when and what, not if, I failed to realize the when was closer than anyone thought. Maybe Derek saw it, thus explaining his absolute insistence that we move to Youbetcha Ranch. He had to have made plans earlier than D-day +6. He said he came to Palmdale to invite us. It didn't feel like an invitation. Since I'd already concluded that we'd end up going, we were ready when he arrived, or nearly so. I'm sure there was another tick before the tock; I should have kept better notes.

The next tick was that EAS message with former Senator Schumer telling us everything except duck and cover. (I knew it would come to me.) The tock was the attack from our friends, the Russians. Then, the kid just had to call the new Governor. The highest rank that both Damon and I held was E-4. Maybe I'm just jealous; a promotion from E-7 to O-8 in the blink of an eye simply for making a phone call.

o

The ranch had wind power, solar power, backup diesel generators and supplies Sharon and I couldn't have accumulated in a lifetime. Truly, the kid knew his old man, Big Jake's Greener's. Except: no way John Wayne used a million dollar pair of shotguns in that movie. Possibly he used Greener's, but no way they were worth that much, at the time.

Either way, they were genuine Greener's and consecutively numbered. Plus there was that old hand fitted case with an old looking felt liner. The problem is clearly that I'm overlooking my own advice, never look a gift horse in the mouth. In the period when the movie was made, or shortly thereafter, you could pick up a pair of Mini-14s for roughly \$500. That's about what I paid for the pair I had at the time. I just remembered, I only fired 3 rounds of .30-06 out of my model 70 Winchester.

"So, Joe, has Derek said anything to you about that Klan chapter here in the area?"

"At length, Gary."

"I haven't really thanked you for the 6 flips of matériel, each for a Brigade for 3 weeks. With the number of people here, I think that would adequately supply us for about a year of all-out war."

"It had better, there won't be any more."

"What do you think of those tanks he built?"

"Long overdue. The Army could have built them; maybe they were afraid of the price tag. He said, that with few exceptions, everything he has was assembled here."

"You're right, except for those Paladins."

"He said they were owned by the 142nd. That includes the radar unit. They decided not to transport all of their equipment, due to a shortage of transportation."

"We haven't picked up as much as we'd like on the radios, what happened to the Mexican invasion?"

"I have an unconfirmed report that they fell back when the missile strike occurred."

"Then we won that one?"

"I haven't heard any more since that report. Did I overhear you saying something to someone to the effect that you didn't care?"

"I was probably talking about Freedom of Religion, Joe."

"Can you explain that?"

"Reader's Digest version ok?"

"I'm listening."

"The long and short of it is that I don't care about anyone's religion except my own. You do your thing, I'll do mine and as long as no one tries to shove their beliefs down my throat, we'll get along just fine."

"And if they do?"

"I'm undecided, maybe I'll ignore them and maybe I'll teach them the 'Spaceman Theory of God'." (Similar to 'Chariot of the Gods', but different because I hadn't heard of the book.)

"The what?"

"Ask Derek; that's far better than getting me started."

"Sure. Quite the fortress, isn't it?"

"With something on the order of 15 miles of fence to patrol. With that Huey, it doesn't take long; otherwise, it's an all-day project."

"Pretty stout fence."

"You've seen the elephant, would that keep out someone who was determined?"

"Not if he were properly equipped, no."

"I more or less thought the same thing. A few well-placed sticks of dynamite would bring that wall down."

"If would if he could get close enough to it to plant it."

"Something else I don't know?"

"I don't know how much Derek has told you, Gary."

"A little here, some later, but not the entire story."

"It's old technology, but you can't simply sneak up on the Ranch."

"Sensors?"

"I'd better leave that for Derek to explain to you."

o

"Derek, do you mind if I do a tour of the other side of that stone wall?"

"I'd rather you not leave the ranch, Dad."

"And, if I insist?"

"You have three men with you and you'd have to take directions from them. We have... uh, perimeter security. Unless you have a military GPS receiver and a map, you could get hurt."

"Can you at least give me a hint?"

"Are you familiar with the mines of the Vietnam era?"

"M-14, M-16 and M-18 APMs?"

"And the M-15, M-19 and M-21."

"Anti-tank mines?"

"Yep. I, uh, cornered the market."

"I'll stay inside."

"Thank you."

I took it to mean that one of his companies probably took the contract to demil the mines and didn't exactly fulfill all the terms of the contract. They 'disposed' of the mines by planting them. Speculation, good speculation. How many APM and ATM mines would it take to protect 15 miles of fence? A contract worth. That sneaky little chit, protected his perimeter and probably got paid to do it. Wait, what about the sensors? They went back to Vietnam, motion and heat sensors, some air deliverable. The sensors were better now and inexpensive.

We hadn't receive an EMP because our electronics still worked. Oversight? Poor planning? Perhaps equipment failure with the device going off too low in the atmosphere to cause widespread damage. The primary concern, or lack thereof, was that it didn't matter. It must have taken miles of wire, wireless was probably too risky. Considering the price of copper, it wasn't an inexpensive pursuit wiring the place.

Military GPS, huh? Until 2000, about 10 times more accurate than the civilian version. The government loosened the restrictions on civilian GPS. I'll bet that followed improving military GPS. GPS satellites broadcast three different types of data in the primary navigation signal. The first is the almanac which sends coarse time information along with status information about the satellites. The second is the ephemeris, which contains orbital information that allows the receiver to calculate the position of the satellite. This data is included in the 37,500 bit Navigation Message, which takes 12.5 minutes to send at 50 bps.

The satellites also broadcast two forms of clock information, the Coarse / Acquisition code, or C/A which is freely available to the public, and the restricted Precise code, or P-code, usually reserved for military applications. The C/A code is a 1,023 bit long Pseudo-random code broadcast at 1.023 MHz, repeating every millisecond. Each satellite sends a distinct C/A code, which allows it to be uniquely identified. The P-code is a similar code broadcast at 10.23 MHz, but it repeats only once a week. In normal operation, the so-called "anti-spoofing mode", the P code is first encrypted into the Y-code, or P(Y), which can only be decrypted by units with a valid decryption key.

When Fiction Becomes Fact – Chapter 13

During the Gulf War, the shortage of military GPS units and the wide availability of civilian ones among personnel resulted in a decision to disable Selective Availability. This was ironic, as SA had been introduced specifically for these situations, allowing friendly troops to use the signal for accurate navigation, while at the same time denying it to the enemy. But since SA was also denying the same accuracy to thousands of friendly troops, turning it off or setting it to an error of zero meters (effectively the same thing) presented a clear benefit.

In the 1990s, the FAA started pressuring the military to turn off SA permanently. This would save the FAA millions of dollars every year in maintenance of their own radio navigation systems. The military resisted for most of the 1990s, but SA was eventually "discontinued"; the amount of error added was "set to zero" at midnight on May 1, 2000 following an announcement by US President Bill Clinton, allowing users access to the error-free L1 signal. Per the directive, the induced error of SA was changed to add no error to the public signals (C/A code). Selective Availability is still a system capability of GPS, and error could, in theory, be reintroduced at any time. In practice, in view of the hazards and costs this would induce for US and foreign shipping, it is unlikely to be reintroduced, and various government agencies, including the FAA, have stated that it is not intended to be reintroduced.

Questions? Last chance, quiz tomorrow.

o

A person could walk along the wall, sort of on the order of those old castle walls. It wasn't that wide, only 10' gross with a pathway barely big enough for a golf cart. At 5mph, that was a 3 hour trip, once around. The access ramps were closed off and a person needed permission from on high to get up there. Being the Boss's father, I probably could have pushed it; I didn't. I wonder who or what is in those towers...

I didn't know it at the time, but I wouldn't be long finding out. I was ready to fight off Fleataxi's Brigands, Halffast's MZBs, Wetbacks, Islamic Fascists, even Hitler's troops, but not Derek's neighbors. The Klan weren't intentionally kept out, I'm fairly sure there were some down in the cavern. If so, they didn't announce the fact. However, Derek's policy of hiring anyone, in accordance with EEO guidelines, didn't sit well with some of the locals.

Derek was looking for (sorry) a few good men and women. Ex-military, preferably SpecOps or an appropriate skill in armor, artillery and recon. His pilots were war vets, seeing the elephant was worth more than a 5 point veteran preference. The Cobras had been stored, that's why I only knew about the Huey. It was the latest AH-1W, Super Cobra.

The AH-1W is a two-place, tandem-seat, twin-engine helicopter capable of land- or sea-based operations. The rear seat pilot is primarily responsible for maneuvering the aircraft. The front pilot controls the aircraft's weapons systems, but he also has a full set aircraft controls. The AH-1W distinguished itself with its more powerful T700-GE-401 fully marinized engines and advanced electronic weapons capability. The AH-1W has significantly improved power available in high altitude, hot environment, and single engine performance. The Super Cobra is armed with a 20mm turret gun, TOW, Hellfire, Sidewinder, Sidearm missiles, and 5 inch or 2.75 inch rockets. The HELLFIRE Missile System increased ordnance delivery and firepower capabilities. The AH-1W Super Cobra provides full night-fighting capability with the Night Targeting System (NTS). The NTS further enhanced the AH-1W's war fighting capability by adding FLIR sensor, CCD TV sensor, Laser Designator/Rangefinder, Automatic Target Tracking and FLIR, and CCD TV video recording. (They were upgraded AH-1Ts.)

I didn't know he bought Bell stock too. Good thing Joe brought reloads for everything. I didn't like the Blackhawk, too many went down. I wasn't referring to Somalia, but if the shoe fits.... While that applied to the UH-1, they were from my generation and I was more forgiving. The aircrews were all former or reserve Marines. The full count turned out to be 4 UH-1s and 2 AH-1W SuperCobras. He could move a Squad per Huey, lightly equipped.

Just between you and me, I was beginning to wonder how much money they had left. Everett Dirksen's famous quote came to mind, reduced from billion to million, "A million here, a million there, pretty soon you're talking about real money..." Hell, I'm so old, I remember him. For the younger readers, Everett McKinley Dirksen was a Republican Congressman and Senator from Illinois. As Republican Senate leader he played a highly visible role in the politics of the 1960s. He helped write the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and played a key role in its passage. He later offered his support for the Open Housing Act of 1968, another landmark piece of Civil Rights legislation. He was one of the Senate's strongest supporters of the Vietnam War. He died in '69, age 73 and has a Senate Office Building named after him, assuming it's still there.

When trouble came, if trouble came, your response would depend on who you were and where you were. The longer after the attack, the greater the possibility that some other survivors might run out of supplies and come looking. I made a decision, the horse could graze and I'd stick to the Humvee (golf cart). That rack held all of the guns I carried and enough ammo for a good sized fire fight. Depending upon circumstances, I could start in on them from at least ½ mile out. If we got down to the Greener's I'd be frozen in place, afraid of slipping on the crap on the ground.

Derek told me the first battle would be the worst and I'd get used to it. I didn't even like the sound of that. There was extensive radio traffic and I assumed that meant that the country hadn't been badly hit. Bzzzzz! There are several nets out there: ARRL, ARES, ALS, FISTS, MARS and the QCWA. In The AV, it was the AVARC and in Arkansas, the Ozarks ARC in Mountain Home, among others. (ARC = Amateur Radio Club)

The Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) is a US DoD sponsored program, established as a separately managed and operated program by the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The program consists of licensed amateur radio operators who are interested in military communications on a local, national, and international basis as an adjunct to normal communications.

MARS has a long history of providing worldwide auxiliary emergency communications during times of need. The combined three-service MARS programs (Army, Air Force, and Navy-Marine Corps) volunteer force of over 5,000 dedicated and skilled amateur radio operators provide the backbone of the MARS program. Their main benefit of MARS membership is enjoying the amateur radio hobby through an ever-expanding horizon of MARS service to the nation. MARS members work by the slogan "Proud, Professional, and Ready".

MARS provides Department of Defense sponsored emergency communications on a local, national, and international basis. MARS also provides auxiliary communications for military, federal, civil, and/or disaster officials during periods of emergency. They assist the military and other organizations in effecting normal communications under emergency conditions. One major mission that MARS has had for many years is to handle morale, welfare, and official record and voice communications traffic for Armed Forces and authorized US Government civilian personnel stationed throughout the world. MARS establishes programs to create civilian interest, recruit qualified volunteers, and furnish training in military communications, techniques, and procedures.

Every year, MARS conducts an appropriate military and amateur radio cross-band exercise as an integral part of the annual Armed Forces Day. They provide a reserve of personnel trained in military radio communications, techniques, and procedures as well as to initiate efforts to improve radio-operating techniques. MARS members test state-of-the-art technology through experimentation and testing. Within the DHI, there is the National Communications system (NCS) which saw its start after the Cuban Missiles Crisis.

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The telephone service was very localized, depending on, among other things, whether or not a city was attacked and whether or not it had power. To the extent that communications depended on satellites, it depended on the ground station, because the satellites seemed to work. Derek had no trouble reaching the Governor; he hadn't known he was trying to. That Representative Davenport, hadn't been in Little Rock, but home, in Gassville. Gassville was slightly larger than Flippin, roughly 1,700 vs. Flippin at 1,400. The big city in the area was Mountain Home. Zinc was to the west, about 30 miles as the crow flies.

I got clued in and was told that our trainload of supplies would attract attention. That Klavern over in Zinc was expected to show up. I did what was prudent, checked the supplies on my golf cart and added additional ammo and ordnance, doubling up on

things like those 40mm grenades. I also made sure my magazines were full and not down loaded 2-3 rounds. What I should have done was stay home. What I actually did was turn up the volume on the CM300 and kept rollin'. (Brings to mind Tina Turner's rendition of 'Proud Mary', rollin', rollin', rollin' on the river)

Say, what's a Klucker? Derek said we might have a couple in the group from Flippin. Some of the town folks held out for a while before they went back to town. I asked Joe and he didn't laugh. In fact, it was the first time I recall seeing him frown. We'd been in Arkansas for months and this was his and my 1st serious discussion of the Klan. I don't know, but I can guess that any group, faced with the current circumstances, could do things they might not otherwise do.

The group from Zinc seemed to be proud of their racist roots. They were also a little desperate and, they knew about that train. It's a shame that Engineer didn't know the expression: El tren pasó y no silbó. Sorry, old joke, but it translates as 'the train passed and didn't whistle.' A good plan in the days after WW III. Joe said that the Engineer insisted on whistling at crossings. He should have just announced, "Here we are, come and get it."

I'm a Yankee, and don't hold with the Klan. Maybe some of my readers do; their choice and none of my business. This time, at least, they turned out to be the bad guys. In his absence, Derek left Joe in charge and Joe kept a chopper airborne 24/7. Many a battle begins just around dawn because the victims are usually sleeping. About 4am every morning Joe made sure all of the air crews were up, fed and full of coffee. The pilots and crew wore NVGs until sunup and we were never without at least one chopper airborne and the rest on 5 minute alert.

Putting together the remaining ANG was proving to be difficult. At the moment, the total force numbered less than 1,000 and the group included some ex-military with combat experience. The troops were encamped in a meadow on the ranch but only because the Governor was maybe 10 minutes away. He was scheduled to come down in a couple of days and outline what he needed and the equipment and supplies available to implement his plan. A few other Noncoms had been located, but none of the Officers. The existing ANG was replete with Mustang Officers, but short on NCOs. Much of the area's population had made it through the attacks and would provide the fodder to fill the ranks.

It takes the military about 3 months to get a recruit through basic military training. That allows time for medical checks, shots, learning to take orders, firearms familiarization, learning how to make your bed, it's a long list. The new ANG troops mostly knew how to shoot a gun wouldn't take orders and didn't need shots cutting the time from 3 months to about 3 weeks. It seems like most of them said something to the effect that, *a country boy can survive*. His private security force had all the training necessary to use the armor, artillery and large Air Force.

o

Got hungry late in the evening and took a chance, ergo, I finished off some leftovers. Then, when I was satisfied, I opened Encarta trying to find out which snake was the infamous two-steps of Vietnam. I had one file claiming there was no any such thing. Still, I persisted and figured out that two-steps real name was *Trimeresurus albolabris*, common name white-lipped tree viper, white-lipped pit viper. Color pattern: green above, the side of the head below the eyes is yellow, white or pale green, much lighter than rest of head. The belly is green, yellowish or white below. A light ventrolateral stripe present in all males, but absent in females. The end of tail not mottled brown.

Strange, I always thought that two-steps was the krait. It had other names, too: The "two-step" is from Southeast Asia, and the term was primarily brought back by US soldiers that went to Vietnam. Other names are "The White Lipped Viper", "Bamboo Viper" "Green Pitviper". Why was I doing this? I don't like snakes. That guy I copied the stuff from, might have known the snakes of Central America, but he'd apparently never heard of the white lipped viper or the black mamba which has been known to attack people just because they pissed one off.

Poisonous snakes use venom (specialized saliva) to capture their food. Six species of poisonous snakes occur in Arkansas, but many harmless snakes are accused of being poisonous. The six are:

1. The coral snake (*Micrurus tener*), which is known from five counties in southern Arkansas, has neurotoxic venom that affects the nervous system of its prey
2. The cottonmouth (*Agkistrodon piscivorous*)
3. The copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix*)
4. The pygmy or "ground" rattlesnake (*Sistrurus miliarius*) occurs statewide in Arkansas
5. The diamondback rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*) is found in the southern Ouachita Mountains, Arkansas Valley, and in the southwestern Ozarks. This snake is sometimes called by the common name "coontail rattler" due to the black and white pattern on the tail
6. The timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) occurs statewide in a variety of habitats.

I'd seen a snake I didn't recognize and wanted to be sure we didn't have any dangerous snakes in the area. Damn, we did. Not all snakes have tails; some of them had 2 legs.

o

I got up around 4:30am with indigestion. I took a swallow or two of Maalox and waited for it to kick in. It did, but I ended up in the throne room for a while. I was just about to crawl back in bed when I heard the whump-whump-whump of the choppers taking off and the local air raid siren let out a shrill wail. "Crap," I thought, "it's too early in the morning for this stuff."

I woke Sharon, and then slipped into my jeans, work shirt, shocks and Wal-Mart work boots. Next, I took a couple of minutes to strap on the ankle holster, shoulder holster

and my Laredoan rig. I topped it off with the chest vest Derek had given me for Christmas '06 and made sure I had a full load of M-14 magazines (14+1). Satisfied, I headed for my golf cart, then stopped – I had no idea where I was going.

"Where's the trouble?"

"You're not going anywhere, Dad."

"Like hell, I'm not," all the while thinking, "fine, don't tell me, I just go towards the gunfire."

My 3 guards were there now and they averaged 6' even, give or take a ¼". Probably all weighted the same too – give or take a pound, they sure looked fit. Maybe I'd lost weight, but not enough I could take them, without a gun. Before Damon had a chance to tell them to grab me, I hobbled out the door and fired up the Humvee. I thought they'd go for their golf cart, but they jumped into a M1114 rebuild equipped with an Mk 19. I had a head start, but that only lasted about 200 yards. The golf cart was more maneuverable than that heavy HMMWV and every time they cut me off, I bypassed them, all the while heading to where the mines (?) were going off. Not good enough to be a movie chase scene; funny though.

They were coming at us from the west side. I must have been thinking that this would be a walk in the park. I wasn't walking to get there and wouldn't be walking when I did. Walk in the park means easy, right? Unless it's Central Park late at night, you probably wouldn't associate a walk in the park with people shooting at you.

o

When I arrived, having out skirted my guard detail, I grabbed the old M1A and my 590A1. Loaded with the 12 pellet 00, the 590A1 would come to bear if they got too close. I got so caught up in the melee, I forgot all about the towers. These guys didn't look like an enemy; they looked more like our neighbors. I stood there almost staring until a bullet whizzed by my ear. My guards were nearly ready to knock me down to save my sorry butt, but I beat them to it, making a sure to not crush my magazines. I pulled the 4¾" Colt, it being uncomfortable to lie on.

I racked the action and took a bead on the nearest attacker, a man trying to work his way through the mines. I got him because I wasn't yet caught up into the action. Maybe half my shots hit someone or something. I might have done better had I slowed to get a better sight picture. These people, perhaps as many as 600, were short on intelligence, but high on courage. While here was no way they could have known about the mine field, they learned quickly, and kept coming.

I was getting low on loaded M-14 mags when one of my guards tossed me my ammo bag with more mags, grenades and other things, getting winged for his trouble. I started

to go to him, CLS bag in hand; but one of his companions checked him over quickly and returned to the battle.

I was dimly aware of a new element being added to the defense, but was too busy to give it much attention. I kept going, even as fatigue set in. This set piece battle was a perfect example of a failed full frontal assault. Then as quickly as it began, the firing stopped, except for the occasional coup de grâce.

o

Now that it was over, I looked at the men I'd shot and felt bad. I found it to be downright depressing. I'd killed some and wounded others. Didn't hit all I shot at either. I recognized a couple of them, people from the cavern during the waiting time... when we were waiting for the fallout to die down. That one over there was Jeb. This guy here was Stu. Hating didn't get them anywhere, except dead. Truth be told, the rifle was far more accurate than my pitiful display showed. In the end, I'd only used one of my weapons, the loaded M1A. Iron sights ruled that day.

When Derek saw me moping, he reminded me that combat wasn't what I thought it might be. Then, he dug out an old record and put on John Cash:

And I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder: One of the four beasts saying: "Come and see." And I saw. And behold, a white horse.

There's a man goin' 'round takin' names. An' he decides who to free and who to blame. Everybody won't be treated all the same. There'll be a golden ladder reaching down. When the man comes around.

The hairs on your arm will stand up. At the terror in each sip and in each sup. For you partake of that last offered cup, Or disappear into the potter's ground. When the man comes around.

Hear the trumpets, hear the pipers. One hundred million angels singin'. Multitudes are marching to the big kettle drum. Voices callin', voices cryin'. Some are born an' some are dyin'. It's Alpha's and Omega's Kingdom come.

And the whirlwind is in the thorn tree. The virgins are all trimming their wicks. The whirlwind is in the thorn tree. It's hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

Till Armageddon, no Shalam, no Shalom. Then the father hen will call his chickens home. The wise men will bow down before the throne. And at his feet they'll cast their golden crown. When the man comes around.

Whoever is unjust, let him be unjust still. Whoever is righteous, let him be righteous still. Whoever is filthy, let him be filthy still. Listen to the words long written down, When the man comes around.

Hear the trumpets, hear the pipers. One hundred million angels singin'. Multitudes are marchin' to the big kettle drum. Voices callin', voices cryin'. Some are born an' some are dyin'. It's Alpha's and Omega's Kingdom come.

And the whirlwind is in the thorn tree. The virgins are all trimming their wicks. The whirlwind is in the thorn tree. It's hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

In measured hundredweight and penny pound. When the man comes around.

And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts, And I looked and behold: a pale horse. And his name, that sat on him, was Death. And Hell followed with him.
The Man Comes Around, John Cash

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The next day we reviewed what happened.

"Damon said he told you to stay out of it."

"He did, but he forgot some things."

"What?"

"I'm the father and you two are my sons. And, he didn't say please. Did we kill them all?"

"No, only those wounded too badly to help. They were Klan, some of that bunch out of Zinc."

"Not all of them, I shot a couple that were down in the cavern with us. While I'm not without some consideration for those guys, they screwed up when they attacked us. If I hadn't been so busy..."

o

I've had help on this story and the reason it didn't get done was that problem with the email system. He sent 'em, I never got them...

News of Prime Minister Tony Blair's imminent retirement has led to a rash of speculation about who America's new best friend in Europe is likely to be. The lead candidates are Nicolas Sarkozy, France's new pro-American president, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Just four years into the Iraq War, an unlikely configuration seems to be emerging: Of Europe's four biggest powers, those that supported the war (Britain and Poland) are showing signs of ally fatigue, while those that opposed it (France and Germany) desire

closer accord with Washington. While the change of mood in Paris and Berlin is a welcome development, it should not distract attention from the need for some eleventh-hour damage control in the relationships with London and Warsaw. Before getting caught up in the glow of new love affairs, US policymakers might want to reflect on three important lessons that recent experience has taught us about alliances.

Lesson 1: Strong alliances are rooted in shared interests, not personalities. Even the most pro-American of politicians will eventually be forced to relinquish a policy course if it is not seen as advancing the geopolitical welfare of their home country. Witness the fates of José Aznar of Spain and Silvio Berlusconi of Italy. Conversely, a country that shares basic US interests is likely to pursue them even if its leader is not emotionally attached to America. In the end, Britain under Gordon Brown will still be a power whose best chance for wielding global influence lies in policy coordination with Washington; France under Nicolas Sarkozy will still be a power whose international profile is enhanced more by defying US power than by accommodating it; and Germany under Angela Merkel is still a near-great power whose best option is to play mediator to – and not make a decisive choice between – its eastern and western options.

Lesson 2: Even in the closest alliances, reciprocity matters. The Iraq War showed that, even in countries sharing fundamental US interests, America's stock can plummet if people believe the costs of supporting US policy outweigh the benefits. The best example is Poland, where politicians and the public alike feel they have little to show for Warsaw's contributions to the Iraq war. Many Britons feel the same way. Asked during a BBC interview what Britain had received for helping America in Iraq, Condoleezza Rice answered, "This isn't a matter of quid pro quos," but about fighting tyranny. But a realist like Miss Rice should know that, even in an age of high ideals, international politics still boils down to the age-old art of diplomatic give-and-take. The inability to grasp this basic rule of statecraft has done greater damage to US ties with London, Warsaw and other Iraq war allies than policymakers realize.

Lesson 3: We cannot afford to ignore Lessons 1 and 2. Failing to nurture close and enduring links with traditional partners like Poland and Britain, while pinning hopes on a new generation of like-minded politicians elsewhere, would be a mistake. Despite what some commentators have written, it is unclear whether Mr. Sarkozy or Mrs. Merkel will be able or even willing to paper over significant differences in their countries' relations with America. We are unlikely, for example, to see a pledge of French reinforcements for Afghanistan or a German delegation to Moscow peddling US missile defense. While working to bridge these differences, Washington should concentrate primarily on regaining the confidence of countries that do share US views but feel shortchanged for their support in Iraq. Put another way, America needs to "tend its base" in world politics.

The point is not that Washington should shun the opportunity to mend fences with France and Germany. Rather, it is that true alliances are built on something more than election results; that they require constant diligence to maintain; and that, in managing our closest alliances, Washington must begin to take a longer-term perspective than it has in the past. As Walter Lippmann said, "An alliance should be hard diplomatic cur-

rency, valuable and hard to get, and not inflationary paper from the mimeograph machine in the State Department." In the years ahead, the value of alliances – and "instinctive" allies in particular – will increase dramatically. Unlike under bipolarity (when America viewed allies instrumentally as a buffer against the Soviet Union) or unipolarity (when it viewed them as disposable) the multipolar landscape of tomorrow will require a more extensive and intelligent use of alliances as instruments of US foreign policy. This new global game board may resemble the Great Power politics of a century ago – an environment that no living US statesman has experience navigating. Coping with this emerging reality will be easier if the global support group that Washington currently enjoys survives the Iraq war intact. While making the most of opportunities for new flames, Washington's main goal for now should be to take better care of old ones.

(Wess Mitchell is director of research at the Center for European Policy Analysis, a policy institute devoted to the study of Central Europe.)

Similarities between the views of Lippmann and Gabriel Almond produced what became known as the Almond-Lippmann consensus, which is based on three assumptions:

1. Public opinion is volatile, shifting erratically in response to the most recent developments. Mass beliefs early in the 20th century were "too pacifist in peace and too belligerent in war, too neutralist or appeasing in negotiations or too intransigent"
2. Public opinion is incoherent, lacking an organized or a consistent structure to such an extent that the views of U.S. citizens could best be described as "nonattitudes"
3. Public opinion is irrelevant to the policy-making process. Political leaders ignore public opinion because most Americans can neither "understand nor influence the very events upon which their lives and happiness are known to depend."

o

The Sauer 38H was produced in three basic models. The first model says "JP Sauer und Sohn CAL 7.65" on the left hand of the slide. The second version only says "CAL 7.65", and the third version omits the safety and the cocking/decocking lever. Towards the end of the war, weapons produced throughout Nazi empire were simplified for quicker, cheaper production. For the 38H, this meant simpler markings, rough finish, and the elimination of features like the slide-mounted safety. So-called "late-war" models were still fully functional though. Final examples, produced up until April 1945 when the factory was overrun by the Allies, feature mismatched serial numbers and poor fit and finish. Mine is the first model.

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May was another normal month in the war against Islamism. At home, a delusional Rosie O'Donnell was back at it. She reminded her viewers that the United States has killed over 600,000 innocents in Iraq. And in an impassioned plea, she and her cohorts reminded us dullards that zealous jihadists must have some understandable reason for being so, well, zealous. Perhaps she meant in the same way that the zealous Waffen SS must have had some legitimate reason for its strong feelings?

Jimmy Carter was also plugging another book on his Christian piety by slandering a president at war for mixing religion and politics. He reminded us that evoking God wins approval from the mainstream when it comes from the Left, only outrage when practiced on the Right. But why would Carter jettison his trope when attacking the commander in chief at a time of war had already won him a Nobel Prize? And why refrain from disparaging talk of a “war against terror” when you did the same about an “inordinate” fear of Communism?

When Fiction Becomes Fact – Chapter 14

Continued...

Even as scholars, along with politicians like John Edwards, were assuring that the war was “overblown,” more terrorists were arrested for plotting to kill soldiers at Fort Dix, and plots more sinister still were uncovered in the United Kingdom. CAIR kept warning us about our illiberal prejudices against Muslims, while each week or so we uncover another cartoonish effort of some young, “mixed-up” Middle Easterners to aid our enemies or blow us up. That such wannabe killers are usually incompetent or amateurish is apparently supposed to remind us how the threat is exaggerated or our own response disproportionate: we are like the worrywart who can’t just keep calm when someone with terrible eyesight is taking potshots at him with a deer rifle from about a hundred yards away.

Critics who deplored the effort to depose a genocidal Saddam Hussein were urging the United States to do something to stop the genocide in Darfur – but of course always with the UN or EU (of Rwanda and Kosovo fame); a familiar formula: our Marines, their diplomats.

Democrats who claim we took our eye off al-Qaeda when we went into Iraq won’t explain how getting out will allow us to put both our eyes back on them when they’re in a nuclear Pakistan. Democrats who assure us that the war is “lost” and the surge hopeless will not cut off funding for it, damn its architect Gen. Petraeus, or explain how in good conscious they can send more soldiers into harm’s way for a war they assure us we can’t possibly win. (Obviously written before SEAL Team 6 got Osama bin Laden.)

Yet another poll, explained away by multiculturalists and apologists, revealed what most Americans have been led to suspect by the near weekly arrest of some conspirator or jihadist sympathizer: a lot of Muslims in the country are very angry and are sympathetic to those who kill violently. According to the Pew poll, one of four young Muslim Americans expressed approval of the tactic of suicide bombing, while six of ten assured us that no Arab Muslim was involved in September 11. Mr. Atta, you see, still lives in that apartment in Cairo with his loving father. Both findings translate into many hundreds of thousands Muslims living the good life here in the United States – 40 percent of whom have arrived since 1990 – who are either unhinged or favor the ideology of suicide bombing that killed 3,000 Americans.

There were more bombings in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Turkey. Islamists were trying to use their Palestinian bases in Lebanon to destroy the elected government there, as they try everywhere to destroy democracy – whether in Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, or Turkey. It was hard to know whether Syria was happier about Speaker Pelosi’s visit or angrier that the US government keeps pressing it on serialized murder in Lebanon.

More rockets were fired from Gaza to show the world the wisdom of the concessions granted in the Israeli withdrawal. The strategy seems to be, “See, we are incompetent

and so can't really kill too many of these Jews, so why fire back?" Or "Can't you at least miss most of the time like we do?"

Hamas thugs assassinated Fatah gangsters and vice versa – and won the usual sympathy from the latest British “Lord” who deplored some supposed disproportionate Israeli response and the cruel stance of the United States that cut off aid to a terrorist organization that could not even fake an “Ok, give me your money – I promise I won't say for a few months that I want to destroy the state of Israel.”

The Iranians offered up the world more braggadocio; even as the UN assured us that they had not complied with nonproliferation protocols, even as estimates of the time they need to get the bomb continued to shrink, even as talk continued of how we could live with a nuclear Iran, just as we live so splendidly with a nuclear Pakistan. Mr. Ahmadinejad gets at least something right: While he is parasitic on almost everything Western from his oil industry to his bombs, he at least keeps up his indigenous credentials by not wearing a tie.

Amid Middle East cries of Western injustice, oil hovered near \$70 a barrel, sending half a trillion dollars per year to the supposedly victimized Middle East, desperately in need of Western cash for impoverished Hamas.

In the aftermath of the seizure of the British naval vessel, and with the impending departure of Tony Blair, there are more rumors that Britain will shortly exit Iraq. A play in London by the name of *Fallujah* presents to its audience swaggering Americans who are terrorizing poor Iraqis in what would otherwise be just a tranquil Muslim community.

After the Danish cartoons, the Van Gogh (great grandnephew of Vincent) murder, the hysteria over the pope's allusions and the riots in France, a new European leadership is starting to sense that their continent is like a juicy, overripe peach, about to be picked in its fullness by Islamists before it rots completely from the inside.

I could go on, but you get the point.

In spite of all this, given the power and wealth of the United States and its cloning mechanism we call globalization, the world shrugs and goes on. I suppose the idea is that we are in a sort of Cold War containment mode with radical Islam. In other words, we try to ensure that jihadists cannot do too much damage to the world order, and that in time we will simply smother them the way we did the earlier Soviet fraud.

So we fight the worst in Afghanistan and Iraq, try to ensure that Iran doesn't get the bomb, hope that Israel is alive one more day, and then put out these small brush fires that burst out at weird places like Fort Dix or a London mosque. In the meantime, our own counterassault continues. Oprah, iPods, the 300, the Internet, and everything else from jailbait Paris Hilton to the ghost of Anna Nicole just chug on, and do their own small parts in undermining and co-opting the 7th-century world of Dr. Zawahiri.

Is it working? In some sense, yes. Poor Dr. Zawahiri, after all, is still ranting about the Kyoto accords from his mud-brick enclave, his cave notes full of cribbed ideas from Al Gore and Noam Chomsky. If he keeps declaiming, Jon Stewart or Bill Maher will do a link-up soon.

But most serious nations, it seems – those in the West, China, Japan, India, and Russia – have come to some sort of unspoken, politically incorrect consensus about the radical Muslim world, its unearned oil profits, and it's very practiced terrorism. I guess they think watching radical Islam is akin to watching a nursery full of ill-tempered infants fighting over hand grenades – the key being to keep them in, and you out of, the playpen when their adult toys periodically go off.

So we made it through another month of this war. And we hope another young Islamist has passed up the madrassa call for martyrdom in Afghanistan and Iraq, and instead is watching 24 reruns and fighting over the judging in “Arab idol.”

So is this “containment” and does it count as a strategy? Sort of.

And will it work? Maybe.

At least until the next big something-or-other goes off.

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“General Ott speaking.”

“General, this is the governor.”

“Yes sir, how can I help you?”

“General, I have some problems. We have the final tally on the Arkansas National Guard that survived all of this, and some of them are commissioned officers.”

“Why is that a problem, sir? I could use the help.”

“Well, I’m getting a lot of resentment from them since they learned that I promoted you over all of their heads. I don’t suppose that any of them have checked in with you yet, have they?”

“As a matter of fact, no, sir.”

The governor sighed. “I was afraid of that. So what do I do about this?”

“Do you have their contact information, sir?”

“Yes.”

“Then send it to me and I’ll take care of it. This is not strictly your job anyway, sir. They just have to accept me as their commanding officer until we come up with something better.”

“I might have to demote you under some of them.”

“If you do, fine. The job is only mine until you find someone better for it. Even my rank is temporary until the Pentagon confirms it.”

“Speaking of which, the Pentagon wants you to contact them. Seems that the Chief of the National Guard Bureau needs a report.”

“Will do, sir. Anything else?”

“One other thing. Could you send some soldiers over to Jonesboro?”

“Certainly. What’s the situation?”

“There was an earthquake in New Madrid. There aren’t many seismologists left but they have given a preliminary rating of 9.3 on the Richter scale.”

“Ew. What’s left of Jonesboro?”

“Not much. The survivors have gathered at Arkansas State University’s campus. I want you to send a convoy over to bring them to someplace safe.”

“Who’s in charge over there?”

“A gentleman named Eric Redman. He was an athletic trainer or something for their basketball team.”

“Good. Is his wife ok?”

“You know them?”

“My wife grew up with his wife, sir.”

“From what I hear, they are both fine, but she’s pregnant.”

“That’s great news, sir. I was afraid that she would lose the baby. I’m sending a convoy tomorrow.”

“Thank you, General. I don’t have anything else for you right now.”

“Thank you, sir.”

I hung up and turned to Dad. “Dad, can you excuse me a moment? I need to call some people and mend fences.”

◦

I sure hope Rosie was in one of the cities that got hit. No one told me where the Pastor was with the attackers. Probably not, too much of a chance of getting hurt. Had I been in charge, I was constantly reminded that I wasn't, I'd have tracked every last attacker down and eliminated the threat, forever. Not my call, apparently the Air Force didn't count for much.

By the time I was in, the Air Force that had soldiers was all but gone. Formed in 1947 from the old Army Air Corps, they stopped being soldiers and became airmen. Put up the M1 Rifle and took up with the M1 Carbine. Half a gun for half soldiers, I guess. The gun locker in our barracks for personal weapons had more firepower than our empty armory was supposed to have. That changed and by the '70s, those airmen were pretty much soldiers again. Now, they have the same semi useless rifle the Army has, the M-16.

There were few things wrong with the M1 Rifle. They fixed them when they developed the M14. Had they gone a step further and incorporated a feature or two from the BM-59, they would have had the perfect weapon. My view, because they liked that poodle shooter. It weighs less, and so does the ammo. Horse hockey, if an old man like me can manage a total of 15 20 round magazines of 7.62m FMJ, those kids can. Want to guess how long it will take Pastor Thom to put together another army? I agree, what with folks like Joe having guns, too, it could take that long.

What with all the snakes here in the Ozarks, I figured I better put together a good snake bite kit. Found a quart of good *Tennessee sippin whiskey*, about right for one snake bite. Stick those words in a search engine and it will even tell you the brand and the product number (old No. 7). Every once in a while, I'd pull out those 4 bottles of MGD, figuring they'd aged enough, and my 3 guards and I would enjoy a cold one. Then, I'd restock the cooler for the next time.

The distance between Flippin, Arkansas and New Madrid, Missouri, as the crow flies is 171 miles on an initial heading from Flippin to New Madrid of east (81.9 degrees). The New Madrid Earthquake, the largest earthquake ever recorded in the eastern continental US, occurred on 7Feb1812. This earthquake was preceded by three other major quakes: two on 16Dec1811, and one on 23Jan1812. These earthquakes destroyed approximately half the town of New Madrid. There were also numerous aftershocks in the area for the rest of that winter. There are estimates that the earthquakes were felt strongly over 50,000 square miles, and moderately across nearly one million square miles. Estimated magnitude was 8. Since 1974, there have been ~4,000 quakes in the area.

Somehow, I thought that New Madrid was further away. There hadn't been a lot of recent activity, anyway. The fault generally followed the Mississippi, or the other way around. They were in much more danger in Memphis than we were in the middle of the Ozarks. I only mention it because I wanted you to know that I was, or was becoming, aware of my surroundings.

Be that as it may, I couldn't get any volunteers to go to Zinc with me and wrap up this problem for once and all time. By ourselves, Aaron and I didn't make a very impressive fighting force. We were well armed, but badly outnumbered. Worse, the Governor told Derek that that should take care of the Klan for a while and he'd better attend to more important things, like saving Arkansas and cleaning up the mess.

We flew 3 flags, the Star and Stripes and the Stars and Bars apparently at the same height; apparently because if you looked very, very closely, the US Flag was about 1" higher. The third flag was of course the Arkansas flag (A diamond on a red field represents the only place in North America where diamonds have been discovered and mined. The twenty-five white stars around the diamond mean that Arkansas was the twenty-fifth state to join the Union. The top of four stars in the center represents that Arkansas was a member of the Confederate States during the Civil War. The other three stars represent Spain, France and the United States, countries that had earlier ruled the land that includes Arkansas. Flag adopted 1913.)

Before he was Governor, Monty Davenport represented District 86 in northern Arkansas' Ozarks. The district included Marion County and parts of Baxter, Boone, Searcy and Stone counties. Party affiliation was Democrat, just like most of Arkansas' other politicians. As a result, I declined to answer when asked my party, or lied and said, "Independent". They knew about California and I hoped they didn't know about Iowa. Iowa was about 50-50, but California was very left leaning and they could assume what they wanted (remember, I don't care).

Derek forbade me to include a natural disaster in this tale and when the ground shook, I didn't mention it to him. Think, 'out of sight – out of mind'. He suddenly got very busy after that, something to do with a problem in Northeastern Arkansas.

"Hey Joe, time for coffee?"

"Back and strong?"

"Yeah, really coffee. You know, Joe, back when New Orleans got hit, I warned people to stock up on coffee if they drank Folgers."

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CINCINNATI, OH, November 11, 2005 – The Procter & Gamble Company's Folgers brand today announced that its New Orleans coffee production and roasting facilities

are fully operational, with all systems back up and running at full capacity, following disruptions caused by Hurricane Katrina. Folgers notified retailers that supply will return to normal by early December. More than 400 of the company's 554 employees in New Orleans are back at work, and the company remains strongly committed to New Orleans, where it has had a presence for more than 50 years, and where it produces more than 50 percent of its coffee.

With the return of normal operations, consumers will begin seeing their favorite Folgers variety in the AromaSeal canister on store shelves. The special Folgers Katrina Relief metal can will be phased out.

"The return to full operations at our Folgers plant is a testimony to the dedication and hard work of our plant employees," said Doug McGraw, Vice President Global Coffee for P&G. "At the same time, our employees' well-being and safety has always been our priority and we remain committed to assisting them in returning to New Orleans and rebuilding their lives."

To help employees get back on their feet, P&G has invested \$2 million to build Gentilly Village, a temporary employee housing facility with 150 trailers located on the plant site, along with some of the comforts of home, including recreation and dining facilities. A \$5,000 employee no-interest loan program was introduced to allow employees immediate access to cash in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

A recently completed employee survey will help Folgers further assess the long-term needs of its employees. The company also recently created an employee relief fund. To date, the fund has amassed more than \$1 million, including the company's matching contribution. It will provide \$650,000 in grants to employees to aid in rebuilding their lives, as well as \$400,000 in grants to local New Orleans organizations suggested by the employees themselves. P&G has already provided more than \$10 million in cash and product to disaster relief through donations to the American Red Cross and America's Second Harvest.

Despite their own hardships, more than 80 percent of P&G employees located in the New Orleans region are involved in local volunteer efforts. P&G's Tide CleanStart program is providing mobile laundry units to Hurricane Katrina victims in New Orleans. The units can wash up to 640 loads of laundry per day. The American Red Cross has reported that P&G employees worldwide have donated \$50 million to global disaster relief.

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"How long did it take them to rebuild?"

"I don't know, but they were up and running in 2 months. What did you drink in Davenport, Butternut?"

"No, Folgers or Hill Bros. I haven't seen Butternut in quite a while. I think their Corporate Headquarters burned down."

"I asked several people to help me. I wanted to go to Zinc and finish that bunch off."

"Don't look at me, partner, they don't like my kind over there. I'm black. I'm an American. I am not a black American. Damn labels. Why can't everyone just understand that people are people?"

"Arkansas was a Confederate state, Joe."

"That war ended in 18 and 65. Just between you and me, the real War of Northern Aggression happened later under the name of Reconstruction. The north refused to give the south the time it needed to heal.

"There are any number of bumper stickers in the South bearing a little cartoon figure in Confederate gray waving a Confederate flag with the words 'Surrender, Hell!', 'Lee surrendered, I didn't,' or the bumper sticker featuring the American AND Confederate flags stating "American by birth, Southern by the grace of God" on them. Northerners who come to the South and see them have various reactions to these effigies, varying from 'quaint,' 'cute,' 'charming,' to 'racist,' 'hateful," and 'gotta be a redneck.' From Maryland and Virginia southward to Miami, across Tennessee, Arkansas, and down into Texas, even in Kentucky and Missouri, the Confederate flag is everywhere. One hundred and forty-two years after Appomattox, why is there still such a display of the Confederate flag?

"One answer is Reconstruction. A period of time that should have been a time of healing after the war only served to further deepen the resentments of Southerners against the North. Contrary to popular beliefs written by historians after the war, ingrained in the mindset of the public in regards to the Civil War, the war itself was all about slavery. It wasn't. Slavery was only one issue among a great, great many. Slavery, in fact, was becoming an economic hardship on slaveholders and was, by economic necessity, on its way out. Historians are on both sides of this argument, but by looking at things from a fiscal and financial point of view, the introduction of the cotton gin and other advances in farm machinery opened the door for the end of slavery. Call slavery what you will, evil or necessary, there are a few facts that should be kept in mind in regards to the practice: Christ did not condemn slavery (nor is it condemned anywhere in the Bible), a great number of African tribes sold prisoners from other tribes to white slavers through the centuries that Africa was being used to provide slaves to the Americas and Europe, and slavery is a practice that even today is alive and well in the Muslim world under Islamic law."

"Read that somewhere?"

"Yes, can't remember where, maybe Wake Up America."

"What did you usually watch on TV?"

"I liked the military oriented shows. Let's see, I watch NCIS, The Unit, Jericho while it lasted, the Military Channel, History Channel and various channels of the Discovery Network."

"Me, too, Joe. I also watched National Geographic to try and keep up on the various types of natural disasters."

"This is Tornado Alley."

"Rarely had those in California. But, the ground shook. The two earthquakes that really got my attention were Whittier Narrows and Northridge."

"You weren't hurt?"

"No, not that required medical attention. Grossly inconvenienced, not injured. I don't know if Derek told you, I lived in Iowa from '65 until '82. My home town had a tornado hit just after I married the boys' mother."

"He said you were walking guard with a 12 gauge."

"I was, a Winchester model 12 with a Cutts Compensator. I had the skeet choke in and the gun was loaded with buckshot."

"Air Force, right?"

"'61 through '65."

"You missed 'Nam."

"Yes, but I was in when Johnson got the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed. Got me the GI bill for college."

"What did you do in the Air Force?"

"Instrumentation. I went to school in Denver at Lowry and served my time in California at Edwards."

"Never saw combat?"

"Not until the Klan showed up."

"You didn't do half bad, for an amateur. You must have hunted a lot."

"Hardly. I can't even remember when I went hunting last, probably in the late '60s and early '70s."

"I've got to go; thanks for the coffee."

"Bye, Joe."

I confirmed things I thought, more than learning a lot of new things in the battle with the Klan. I knew to keep my head and butt down as much as possible; we had good, solid cover. I knew that I had time to properly place my shots; it only took a few extra seconds, again from behind cover. The problems I had weren't any different from those experienced by the other defenders, I had enough loaded magazines, just didn't bring them from my golf cart. If the issue came up again, I wouldn't make the same mistake.

It led me to wonder about our troops during that Iraq War. I'm sure most of them carried more than a standard combat load of 210 rounds of 5.56mm. I had asked Derek before, receiving vague answers. Now I pinned him down and demanded an answer.

"Dad, we carried as many magazines as we could and I generally carried 14 30-round magazines of 5.56mm and at least 5 15-round M9 magazines. The springs in those pistol magazines were the most unreliable element of the pistol. They really need more tension and maybe another loop. However, our HMMWV started out with a Ma Deuce and ended up with the CROWS. That wasn't perfect either, the traverse was a little on the slow side."

"Why didn't you get the Purple Heart, you earned one twice?"

"No visible injuries and if you'd seen what happened to some of our guys, you wouldn't have put in for it either. I told you we modified our M-1114s and were protected against everything but the largest IEDs."

"You kept me confused most of the time and those cryptic clues you gave me didn't help much. You said you'd have an M-4, and didn't tell me when you switched to the A2. The thing about those care packages Sharon put together and I packed was the weight of the batteries. We sent nearly as much on shipping as we did on the contents.

"Do you believe me now about a possible nuclear war? If not, I drive you down to Little Rock or up to Springfield. BTW, what happened in Northeastern and Eastern Arkansas, damage from the New Madrid Fault?"

"Some, yes. We've been doing what we can to maintain Law and Order and provide security from the people cleaning up Little Rock. Then, we have to move down to Pine Bluff and provide security while they bring the construction of the pyrotechnics back to full operation."

When Fiction Becomes Fact – Chapter 15

"What about our Muslim population?"

"The largest concentrations were in LA and Detroit. We shouldn't see them although we have a recent list of militants for both areas."

"Know anything about Palmdale, Ron said it got overrun."

"That's as far as the Mexican Army got, the Antelope Valley. They pulled up stakes 3 days before the attack."

"Any word on casualties?"

"No, sorry. Any word about Ron?"

"He is/was in Cedar Hill, just south of the Colorado. He said they could move north, if necessary."

"When do you expect him to show up?"

"If he shows up, he'll have to bypass some targets so I don't know if he will and can get by all of the targeted cities. I'd expect him to travel across the southern portion of Colorado."

We had a problem and didn't know it, yet. How do you keep track of what's going on around the country/continent/world? ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN or FOX? Do you read online versions of newspapers and the news source listed? Pretty hard to do when the net is down. More difficult when 90% of the news you get is from ham band radios. The Governor had some sources, but I don't know what they were. Derek remarked he was running on several sources, including the information his people and I were supplying from our ham radios. We were near the peak of the sunspots which didn't help a lot.

160 meters through 40 meters are really long range communications and the shorter the wave length, the shorter the non-line-of-sight range. 1.2ghz is satellite communications and not everyone has a radio using the frequency. HF (below 30mhz) doesn't like sunspots, or the other way around, doesn't matter, the result is the same. With military communications, ham bands used heavily when I was young had come back into heavy use. Please note, I'm generalizing. Some very long distance communications have occurred on 2 meters.

It appeared that we were lucky to be out of shaky land, after the war, for whatever reason, the San Andreas Fault let loose. Maybe the nukes loosened it some; it had been overdue for the big one. Some of those volcanoes in the Cascade Range let loose, too. A result of the Cascadian Subduction Zone, I wondered what that meant about the Zone

itself. Anyone trying to make it in a National Forest or Monument might be rethinking his/her choice.

In and of itself, there is nothing out of the ordinary about a natural disaster. In '80, Mt. St. Helens experienced a landslide resulting in it blowing its side (top, if you prefer). There was the Indian Ocean tsunami off the coast of Sumatra. History shows that they happen all of the time, just not usually all at once. I have, on my computer, a file I named Disasters.doc that contains the tables from Wikipedia.

The tables emphasize death tolls, not economic impact. Is economic impact as important as the death toll? I'd guess that would depend on your perspective and whether one of the dead was a relative of yours. I can tell you that the lists are much different. We were beginning to get an idea of the death toll of WW III in the US. Frankly I don't care about other countries except for the UK. We didn't have figures for them. Wiki had a disclaimer on their page about US disasters by damage estimate: Due to inflation, the damage estimates are not comparable. The year given is the year in which the currency's valuation was calculated to.

The US death estimates varied, primarily by time. Initial estimated deaths of 60 million, were lower than the final estimated death toll of 160 million because some people took time to die from the fallout and 'other causes'. One could include those Kluckers in the 'other causes' list. I can tell you how some of those people died, from ap land mines and bullets of multiple calibers, including seven-six-two millimeter; Full metal jacket.

"Today... is Christmas! There will be a magic show at zero-nine-thirty! Chaplain Charlie will tell you about how the free world will conquer Communism with the aid of God and a few marines! God has a hard-on for marines because we kill everything we see! He plays His games, we play ours! To show our appreciation for so much power, we keep heaven packed with fresh souls! God was here before the Marine Corps! So you can give your heart to Jesus, but your ass belongs to the Corps! Do you ladies understand?" (Gunny Ermey playing the role of Gunny Hartman.)

Did I tell you that Gunny was born in Kansas, 1 year and 1 day after I was born in the PRK? Sorry, I forgot. Gunny had a lot of guns at home and a Jeep (M151) on Mail Call fitted out with the reliable standard, Ma Deuce. I wonder how he made out when the Mexican Army invaded Palmdale? He probably pulled out and went to Ridgecrest (China Lake). The M151s, have been deemed a hazard to public safety; therefore, the DoD renders them inoperable prior to sale (i.e., cut or crush the unitized body and suspension system).

With seat belts and a roll bar, there was nothing wrong with a Jeep, model M151 (the Army calls them ¼ ton utility trucks). There were several on the ranch, some support weapons mounted on the roll bars. If the ATF were still around, they could spend a year on the ranch just listing the violations of all of those UNCONSTITUTIONAL LAWS.

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Say, did you know that, "Japan has the fifth largest navy in the world and spends over \$40 billion a year on defense." Another list, Japan isn't included in the top ten.

Initially moored at Bremerton Naval Shipyard after her decommissioning in 1990. In 1998 she was towed to the NETC, Newport, RI. Then she was transferred to Suisan Bay, California. The Iowa contrary to some writings is in very good condition. Her #2 turret that was damaged from a fire in 1989, was almost completely repaired and almost everything needed to complete the repairs are being stored inside the turret. She may be used as a deck only museum in San Francisco Bay.

"There is only one way to conduct yourself in this world, only one way to remain always above reproach. For a real leader, the elements of personal virtue – self-reliance, self-control, honor, truthfulness, morality – are absolute. The time for words has now passed. From this day forward, you will have to demonstrate that you can live up to the standards you were taught.

"We live in an age where friends and enemies alike will seek out and focus on any and all mistakes made under great stress, where the irregular battlefield will present life-and-death decisions, often with no good choices, where the slightest error in judgment or even the perception of an error can be magnified many times over the Internet and on TV and circulated around the globe in seconds.

"You can never be content to be merely good citizens. In everything you do, you must always make sure that you are living up to the highest personal and professional standards of duty, service and sacrifice.

"And when you are called to lead, when you are called to stand in defense of your country in faraway lands, you must hold your values and your honor close to your heart. You must remember that the true measure of leadership is not how you react in times of peace or times without peril.

"The true measure of leadership is how you react when the wind leaves your sails, when the tide turns against you. If at those times you hold true to your standard, then you will always succeed, if only in knowing you stayed true and honorable."

Sounds good, right? SecDef Gates to the 2007 Air Force Academy graduating class. Yeah right.

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One thing I knew not to do was mix my ammo. I had 147gr, 168 gr. and 175 gr. I knew to set the sights for one brand (each bullet weight was a different brand) and to reset them before I changed to a different bullet weight. My original M1A used 147gr FMJ (surplus) and 168gr HP (Black Hills). On that rifle, the iron sights were set for the mili-

tary surplus and my Aimpoint sight for 168gr. I suppose everyone has some sort of system. The magazines I normally carried were filled with surplus.

Comparison of the M1A, which was my preferred weapon, using the lower bullet weights also disclosed that if I forgot which ammo I was using, either sight would work past 200 yards. It wouldn't matter providing we weren't attacked again and probably not even if we were. I don't believe I pulled the trigger on anyone more than 200' or so out.

He also increased the screening process in place after that set to with the Klan. New employees could have a bright red neck, but they couldn't evidence any prejudice unless it was against illegal aliens. The US had a problem and knew it without realizing how serious it was. I'm speaking of the gang problem. Rumor had it that Chavez was funding and supplying MS-13. Hell, I figured they were mostly dead, living in the large cities all over the US. Not so, I found from one radio conversation I listened in on.

It seems that when the Mexicans invaded, rather than come right out and join in with their comrades, the gangs laid back and 'picked off strays'. All the while accumulating more weapons, munitions and ordnance (the latter is anything bigger than a pistol or rifle cartridge). Considering what they paid for weapons, etc. in South America, the only cheaper source was 'borrowing it' from armories and depots. Where is it written that strategic reallocation is limited to the good guys? I know, if the bad guys do it, we call it looting.

Things began to settle down and we got ready to plant the crops and gardens for the summer of 2010. I'll bet you were wondering what year it was, the last time I mention the year was 2009. Hitlery had served less than a full year in office when she lost out to Osama Obama. With our early growing season, Derek suggested we might get two crops, depending on what we planted. A person had to figure on planting enough hay and grain for about 100 head of horses, 600 head of hogs, 500 head of cattle, a bunch of sheep and chicken/turkey feed.

We planted some of everything we could grow in northern Arkansas. I said we, actually, I watched. Is a 50 acre garden large? You bet your bippy it is; some folks have smaller truck farms. Everything they grew and put up was in pint, quart and half-gallon jars. Derek preferred jars because they could be reused several times allowing him to store lids (by the case) and a few replacement jars. The pamphlet only described the food processing operation in general details and I'll not add to that. However, they could process enough meat for the ranch and could also process specialty meats like sausages and various lunch meats. The smoke house was fairly large, but had to be if they smoked that many hams, picnics and sausages. The herd sizes were kept constant through meat processing. I liked this place; it was everything I dreamed of for a survival retreat and more.

Remember when he pointed out my tp? He said maybe 10,000 rolls? There are 6 rolls to the package and 5 packages to the bundle. I snuck a peek at the inventory records

and the last time he ordered, it was ~400 bundles of Charmin. The Northern quilted was more like 38,000+ rolls (he bought the 16 roll bundles of the Giant rolls).

The ranch sold fresh food to the grocers in the area (there aren't that many). They also increased production of their bakery products after the war to supply the area bread and baked goods. While the ranch produced some wheat, most of it had to be imported from Kansas, by the train load. This was an advantage because, thanks to Joe, we had our own 200 car train. Unfortunately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the cars were flatbeds and none of them were grain cars. If it was anything like California, there were sidings full of empty grain cars in Kansas. I recalled from my trips to San Francisco, way back when, seeing hundreds of cars on sidings waiting to haul cotton. Man, did they grow a lot of cotton in the Big Valley (San Joaquin not Sacramento).

o

"Long time, no see."

"Sorry, Dad, we've been busy. We were just getting started on Little Rock when we had that quake in the northeastern part of the state. Memphis is more in the river than not. I didn't realize how much planning was involved in this job."

"You have good managers on the ranch, you're lucky."

"Luck had nothing to do with it. I used a search firm to pin down candidates and then I interviewed them. I made sure that they were fully capable of functioning if TSHTF. I made it a goal to have as close to 10 years of supplies as I could. I took a few lessons from the LDS Church when I did that."

"I may be wrong, but LDS Church guidelines are for a one-year supply."

"You're not wrong. However, after reading some of your stories, I decided that we had to be prepared for the really long term."

"What's the status of the war with Mexico?"

"You know they pulled out after we were attacked?"

"I knew that, yes."

"They never came back. Paladin Artillery units are being stationed along the border to see that it remains that way. We have over 1,000 Paladins. The border is about 3,141km long. Spaced about ever 4km, we can cover the entire border with overlapping fields of fire and have reserve forces."

"Do you have to give up your battery?"

"No, they're reserve forces."

"Is that our new border fence, artillery?"

"Only until they can actually construct the fence. At the rate they're going, it will be for the near future. You knew they decided to change the design, didn't you?"

"Nobody tells me nuttin'."

"Yeah, they're going to build a prison fence, 2 layers of chain link surrounding a third made up of high voltage cables."

"That won't stop them from tunneling."

"The new seismic sensors will."

"What is the overall status of the state and the ranch?"

"Little Rock has been scraped nearly clean and rebuilding should start next spring. The ANG has reformed and has reallocated resources. We located and control all sources of Jet A and aviation gas. We sent a convoy to Texas and picked up fuel stabilizers to extend the life of remaining stores of unleaded and diesel fuel. Best estimate is that it will be several months before any refineries are running at full capacity. Since Canada wasn't involved in the war, they continued working on the pipeline and it has been completed to the US border. It will be up to the towelhead to build the US portion.

"I started construction of that new facility to convert vegetable oils to biodiesel, Dad. We will continue to produce food for up to 5,000 people. There are several other large truck farms coming online this year. Youbetcha Ranch is probably the most secure facility in Arkansas. Monty, the Governor, had discussed the possibility of housing the state government here until Little Rock is rebuilt."

"Do you go along with that?"

"You taught me that it can't hurt to have a few low friends in high places."

"Well, there's that. BUT, what if he tries to take over the ranch using some kind of Executive Order?"

"No sweat, I told him about Geraldo."

"Ah that, 600-yards... Actually I've been practicing and I do believe I could make a 600-yard shot now."

"We'll set them up in one of the other areas, if we go that way. He has his own protection detail, Dad."

"And, thanks to you, I have mine. You know how I feel about politicians, especially Democrats. Am I still going to have free run of the ranch?"

"Yes, BUT, you can't shoot the Governor."

"What about Geraldo?"

"If he's still alive; and, if he shows up, be my guest."

"You're condoning murder?"

"That's between you and the Lord. I heard the Devil provides shovels."

o

Spoil sport! I was assigned duties – patrolling the wall making sure the security force was maintaining a heads up approach to things. It wasn't really fair, my Humvee made very little noise. I rather suspect my guard detail was giving them fair warning using a Spearhead radio (the handheld SINCGARS radio). I don't know; they wouldn't issue me one. They, in this case, were my oldest son, Damon, who was in charge of communications. Derek probably told him not to issue me one. The Spearhead is predominately a SINCGARS compatible export radio for our allies.

However, given free run of the ranch and my natural attitude about things, I had one. I was forced to leave it in the charger stand in my basement, unless we were attacked again. Believe me, it was no problem, there wasn't anywhere on the ranch that the CM300 couldn't reach. I did my best to keep those 3 Rangers on their toes. One day I'd use the Humvee and another I'd ride Shelia. I think they used a HMMWV to trail me when I rode.

Out of the bad, came some good. When I stopped taking Plavix and returned to 81mg aspirin and Prevacid, allowing my left shoulder to loosen up. I still couldn't raise my left elbow as high as the right. I think that medication Derek's doc had me taking helped everything, a little.

"Hey, butthead."

"They let you in?"

"I told 'em I was looking for Tom."

"And?"

"They said they never heard of a Tom. So then I told them the owner's father. They escorted me to your home, under guard."

"Just you or is Linda with you."

"She's in the kitchen talking to Sharon. Why the heavy security, Gar-Bear?"

"We were attacked."

"MZBs?"

"The Klan."

"The Klan?"

"Never thought to include that in any of my stories, did I?"

"You still a combat virgin?"

"Not any more, unfortunately. You?"

"I was when we started to come here. It's tough out there, partner. We didn't even get to Jericho before TSHTF."

"Jericho is a fictional small town."

"Maybe that's why we couldn't find it."

"The only Rogue River is in Oregon."

"Yeah, we couldn't find it either."

"Still depending on that SU-16 for fire power?"

"No, got a M1A."

"Which model?"

"I have the Loaded and Lyn has the Super Match. They both shoot nearly the same, but we've never had to shoot them over 300-yards."

"I have a Super Match too, but I prefer the original rifle I bought. Hell, I have about one of everything, but when I ride, I carry the Marlin 1894 cowboy along with my Greener and 4 handguns."

"A Greener? Oh, you mean a John Wayne copy."

"No, I mean the Greener's he used in 'Cahill' and 'Big Jake'. They're a matched pair, sequentially numbered in the wooden box you saw in the movie."

"Jeezus!"

"Close, John." (Hey, it was a good line last time.) "He's rich, very, very rich. I have everything I ever want and then some. More importantly, I have a horse that doesn't want to run away with me."

"No Salina?"

"This one's named Shelia and she understands when you cock the Colt and dare her to run. I take it Robert isn't with us any longer?"

"His wife died the same day he did, from the same cause, heart attack. She died first and the stock must have been too much for him."

"Did you bring his guns too?"

"No, I left them in Cedar Hill for my kids."

"Just so you know, I been drinking. I drink about one beer every 3-4 months. Although Derek has a micro-brewery, I don't have access. I do have a bottle of Jack Black but it's never been opened because I've never been bitten by a snake."

"Got iced tea?"

"Yeah, but you'll have to sweeten it. I have several bottles of Sweet and Low, just in case."

"Just in case, what?"

"You showed up!"

"Where's Clarence?"

"Good question."

"Well?"

"Damned if I know, this here's Klan territory."

"I suppose we'll have a mobile home?"

"Nope, I saved a house for you."

"Two story?"

"Nope, but it has a full basement, so from one point of view, it's a two story."

"Still wearing a cowboy hat, I see."

"Yeah, this is the one I bought when I was chasing Kathy."

"I wear a white hat."

"The problem with a white hat is that they get grubby. I wear a straw hat in the summer, though."

"You got a horse for me?"

"Hell, I even have a Humvee for you."

"H1 or H2?"

"No, it's a model of golf cart."

"Figures."

"I might be able to get you a Dodge Ram."

"Do you go anywhere?"

"Just around the ranch."

"Then I'll just ride with you."

"Your horse's name is Salina."

"Chit."

"She does do that. She's a 5 year old Morgan mare. I have one question, how did you know where to come?"

"You left that pamphlet lay."

"I did?"

"You did."

"How are you fixed for supplies now that you have real rifles?"

"We have 10 magazines between us. We have about 800 rounds of 7.62 left. Can you help out?"

When Fiction Becomes Fact – Chapter 16

"My choice?"

"Anything you have."

"How about I give you both more USGI magazines. I'll add a couple of thousand rounds of M118LR to that for Lyn; and for you, how about 5,000 rounds of Black Hills 168gr Match HP?"

"What do you shoot?"

"I like the surplus. Thing is, I don't have much left. When it comes to the Black Hills, there must be 100-150 500-round cases that Derek bought. Some of it is boat tail soft point, but most of it is match boat tail hollow point."

"Is that legal?"

"Are you a soldier in an army?"

"No, why?"

"Then, it's legal."

"And if I were?"

"You could help me strip rounds out of the belted ammo. It's mixed M80 ball and M62 tracer."

"Is that hard?"

"It's easier to strip than .50BMG ammo."

"I brought my reloading gear."

"I'm sure we can find you enough empty brass to use up all of your powder, primers and bullets."

o

I didn't realize when I said that that Joe had collected all the brass and run it through an industrial sized reloading machine, a Dillon Super 1050 Auto-indexing Reloader and had all of those die sets. He could reload up to 2,000 rounds an hour once the cases were cleaned and ready to use. There was also a SL900 for shotgun shells, but I could reload my own with my Lee Loader, I didn't really have many. I wondered if Joe knew

Herb, Derek's neighbor in Huxley. We didn't have any empty brass, but we did have bullets, primers (boxer and Berdan) and smokeless powder.

If you didn't believe what I reported about the US being Imperialists, ask Vlad, he says we are. That why they built up until they were ready and attacked us. Hmm. I think I once said something about the Cold War never ending... Interestingly, India and Pakistan never went to it. When China and the Pakis defeated India in 4 days, they proceeded to divide the Kashmir between them and China took a major portion of India. I don't know why, maybe they needed more snakes. Then, when Russia attacked the US, they sat back and watched. I never trusted that Musharraf anyway.

Well, we won one war, the 4th Mexican War, but by default, they retreated when Russia attacked. If we went to war with them one more time and won, would that make us an ACE? OTOH, who hasn't defeated Mexico?

Rather than fight with Iran over parts for the F-14 Tomcats, we should have bought them back and used them – I'm sure that many of them had very low flight hours. That way, we could have continued to use the Phoenix missile. We sure had a lot of spare parts to restore the aircraft and upgrade them. But no, that makes too much sense.

It's funny how something you say impresses someone. One fella uses a line out of one of my stories as his sig: "The only difference between a Liberal and a Socialist is the spelling." (Tired Old Man in Whetstone) About that, Whetstone was a jointly written story by Derek and yours truly. I'm probably the one who wrote that, but my memory isn't up to snuff these days. I could add to it, though. The only difference between a Socialist and a Liberal is a matter of degrees.

And now, the \$64 dollar question, who still has nukes?" India, Pakistan, China, Israel and the two real belligerents, Russia and the US. Just because Israel was attacked doesn't mean they're out of the nuke business. True, they probably have fewer, but still... Which only goes to show the Einstein was wrong and I wasn't far from being close. He chose clubs and I chose M14 rifles. With a bayonet, an M14 could double as a short bladed spear. That's why I wanted to put a 16" bayonet on mine.

I decided, without asking, to tour the ranch in my H1 Alpha. I loaned Ron a Greener and we'd did a couple tours, stop and practice, collect our brass and turn it over to Joe. It didn't take long for that to get boring. Can't remember the story where the 3 Amigos spent their time in a coffee shop, maybe *The Ark*, but there was Fiddler's Green and it served coffee and snacks until 4:30pm when they switched to beer and booze. We were missing Clarence and I was out of touch with FT and Russ. On the other hand, there was a truckload of Folgers and not many folks here liked it, preferring Maxwell House. My other favorite coffee is French Market containing Chicory (city blend, not Creole). Both came from New Orleans and I'd be willing to bet Joe would like it, it's strong and black.

When we weren't out 'riding fence', as Ron called it, you'd find us in Fiddler's Green, drinking coffee and cleaning our weapons. I kept working on my knife, it was getting close to a razor edge. And, over in Zinc, Pastor Thom Robb was getting ready for another attack. Someone beat him to it, his competition, MS-13 and affiliated gangs.

"So, how will I know if we're attacked?"

"One, you'll hear gunfire or mines going off. Two, they let loose with the air raid siren. Grab a couple of long guns and all your loaded magazines plus spare ammo. I take my rifle and a few things in my Humvee. The rifle rack has all my weapons in it. If you'd prefer, they'll build you a rifle rack on yours, just let me know. If you have any Barnes solids, make sure you bring those, they'll stop most vehicles. If you check with Joe, you can get an M16A2 with a M203 and HEDP rounds. Just remember, more is better and don't bother asking if you can go, Damon will say no."

o

Back then, you thought the Cold War ended and Russia was our friend:

A top Russia expert at the State Department issued an unusually sharp public criticism on Thursday of Moscow's behavior under President Vladimir V. Putin, describing the Kremlin as bullying its neighbors while silencing political opponents and suppressing individual rights at home.

The comments, approved by the White House, are the latest volley of criticism between Washington and Moscow in recent days. Although the White House said this week that President Bush would play host to Mr. Putin on July 1 at the Bush family compound in Maine, the speech is likely to add tension at a time when the broader dialogue between Washington and Moscow is already taking the most caustic tones since the collapse of communism. (If George and Vlad were buddies, imagine what it would be like if they didn't like each other...)

Whether we'll have WW III is not the question. The question is who will attack us? Russia and we have the most nukes, you figure it out. If the Chinese do it, their first shot will be to take out our satellites followed by EMP weapons. While they are not credited with having a lot, they have a whole lot more than we had the only time we used them in a war... Remember, I DON'T CARE. It's all beyond my control; hell it's even beyond your control. Pray? That's the talk you have with God to save your soul, not your body. When the politicians get done with us, it will probably be beyond fixing. In the age of instant communications, won't it be a shame when the first notice you have of Yellowstone exploding is the ash in the air?

One guy out there has a 'better idea':

Living just 80 miles (as the crow flies) east of Lake Yellowstone, as I do... I am offering a great bargain for all you folks who are afraid of Yellowstone's "Supervolcano" erupt-

ing.

For the nominal sum of \$100 a year, I will speed-dial you if an eruption occurs.

Meanwhile, you can wring your hands and say "Oh gosh! I can't live in Wyoming... the volcano might erupt"... and I'll enjoy spending your annual \$100 stipend.

Before you write a check, remember a pyroclastic flow moves at a speed of 700km/hr and he's only 80 miles east (129km – 11 minutes away). Plus, the estimated radius of the pyroclastic flow from that Supervolcano is ~200 miles, minimum. Elapsed time to fill the circle, not long enough to call people, especially if you're taking cover. Pyroclastic flows are fast-moving fluidized bodies of hot gas, ash and rock (collectively known as tephra) which can travel away from the vent at up to 700 km/hr. The gas is usually at a temperature of 100-800 degrees Celsius (212-1472 degrees Fahrenheit). A pyroclastic surge is a fluidized mass of turbulent gas and rock fragments which is ejected during some volcanic eruptions. It is similar to a pyroclastic flow but contains a much higher proportion of gas to rock, which makes it more turbulent and allows it to rise over ridges and hills rather than always travel downhill as pyroclastic flows do.

o

"Say, Gar-Bear, would you mind pointing the barrels the other way?"

"It's a Greener, you have to cock it, partner."

"Sez you."

"I'll put it in the scabbard, satisfied?"

"It's loaded, right?"

"Pretty hard to kill someone with an empty gun. Unless, of course, it's daddy's unloaded .38 on a shelf in the closet."

We were in the Humvee, taking our early morning tour. It looked like it might rain; the sky to the west is very dark. Derek was mending fences, so to say, and trying to clean up that mess to the east. This time, I wasn't counting (rule of threes).

"What would you say if California fell off into the ocean?"

"Jeez, I don't know; goodbye? Anyone I know who lived there, and liked, was smart enough to leave."

"If we have WW IV, how do we get into the cavern?"

"Go into any ranch structure, access the tunnel and walk. Don't take much stuff, it's a long way."

The gardens were coming along nicely, I guess. When your garden is 50 acres, you don't examine every plant. The best bet is to get on a hill and look it over. You go down there, someone will hand you a hoe. I'd have just spread the manure in the fall and plowed it in, it would have composted itself. Wasn't my ranch and nobody listened to me anyway.

"It feels like we're being followed."

"We are. I have a guard detail of 3 Rangers: Manny, Moe and Jack or something. If it makes you feel any better, think of them as baby sitters. They try real hard to stay out of sight because I'm not supposed to know they're there."

"Is this all there is to see?"

"Hills and patches of bottom land, what did you expect?"

"So, why didn't you get some people and track down that bunch that attacked and end it once and for all?"

"I tried, I couldn't get any volunteers. I was told they were all named Arnold."

"I'll be back, Arnold?"

"Yeah, him. Want a cigar, I have Marsh Wheeling's and Dutch Master Presidents?"

"Cheap cigars?"

"I have some Churchill rejects."

"That's better. If you going to kill yourself smoking, it might just as well be something you enjoy smoking."

I gave him a bundle of 25 out of the cooler. Then, deciding I didn't like the look of the sky, we headed back to Fiddler's Green. We no sooner got inside when it began to rain – ash.

"Yellowstone?"

"That or Long Valley."

"How can you be sure, there are 10 in the US, even one in New Mexico."

"Yeah, north of Albuquerque called Valle Grande."

"You know about that one?"

"Hasn't gone off in a million years, Ron."

I fired up the laptop and read him the list: Battle Ground Lake, Mt. Aniakchak, Crater Lake, Mt. Garita, Long Valley, Newbury, Mt. Okmok, Valle Grande and Yellowstone. I didn't mention the 5 in Canada. Crater Lake is the deepest lake in the US but the deepest in North America is Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories. Yellowknife is on the northern shore. He was smart to come here; he was surrounded with Valle Grande on the south and Mt. Garita on the north. All he would have to deal with here was ash and no pyroclastic flow.

Who says you can't step in it and come out smelling like a rose? All in all, we'd managed to stay one step ahead of a natural disaster or far away enough that it wasn't that big of a deal.

o

Okay, what does it take to declare Martial Law in America? It takes 1) a declared state of emergency, 2) a readied "homeland" paramilitary system to enforce the powers of Martial Law, and 3) one signature of the one person who has the authority to make the declaration.

So, let's get this straight. 1) In 1933, America's WAS declared into a state of emergency, which has never been rescinded. We are presently in a declared state of emergency (and have been for nearly 75 years), 2) multiple paramilitary systems have been raised, readied, operating, and practicing – beginning in 1974, and 3) the President of the United States need only sign a piece of paper to end the constitutional government of the United States.

On April 5, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declares a national emergency and issues Executive Order 6102, making it illegal for American citizens to own gold.

There is no record of the National Emergency being rescinded. The Gold Reserve Act of 1934 was passed to replace EO 6102. The Nixon Shock was a series of economic measures taken by US President Richard Nixon in 1971 including unilaterally cancelling the direct convertibility of the US dollar to gold that essentially ended the existing Bretton Woods system of international financial exchange. On August 15, 1971, President Nixon imposed a 90-day wage and price freeze, a 10 percent import surcharge, and, most importantly, "closed the gold window", ending convertibility between US dollars and gold.

o

On May 9, 2007, our president signed a National Security Presidential Directive – an unconstitutional piece of paper – which gave to himself the powers of total dictatorship over the entire nation (NSPD-51) and Congress has no say so whatsoever. Can you say "total dictatorship?"

But more to the point, the question we must ask ourselves is this: are we now under Martial Law? We know for a fact that our constitutional rights have been politically and bureaucratically eliminated; we know for a fact that the global government has been raised; we know for a fact that the NAU is a fast-track reality; we know for a fact that the United Nations has absconded with our traditional military (who are not coming back to the states); we know for a fact that the United Nations Agenda 21 mandates that we live, believe, think, and act according to their worldly directives; we know for a fact that the International Property Maintenance Code has silently maneuvered itself into all American communities – much like Eminent Domain and land trust organizations – patiently awaiting the directive to seize most American homes; we know for a fact that the Civilian Labor Camps are up and readied; we know for a fact that disarmament is sneaking up on us like all global-political veils; we know for a fact that a shadow dictatorship manages our 2-Party system; we know for a fact that the largest global corporations in the world buy all laws into existence, and we know for a fact that our fear is translating into a completely fractured resistance to all-the-above. We are in deep trouble, America! The whole world is in deep trouble.

It is this writer's opinion that we are in a passive state of Martial Law right now. However, once the "Big Emergency" is called into play and strategic reality, we will see the expected results of our 2-Party maneuvering, which is the permanent end of our freedom and nation.

And amidst all this, what do the American people do? They play the "bring our soldiers home" game or the "illegal immigration" game. They play "the debates" game and the "global warming" game. People! You cannot see the forest for the dialectic trees! Why, why, why can't you put the pieces together to see the facts before your faces??? America is the sacrificial lamb! Your freedom is gone!

All the take-over/conquering systems have been raised with you watching and realizing nothing! And all of the red-flag wavers, who have been trying for decades to drop the facts in your laps, are on severely borrow time. When communications are taken over by the paramilitary systems, you will never again be privy to truth of any kind – only dictatorship, rules, labor, lies, regional masters, brute force, and conquerors.

Think, people think! What happens to the elderly, the infirmed, the "imperfect," your pets, your infants, your autistic grandchildren, your school children, your homes, your possessions, your bank accounts, your automobiles, your health – when everything you do and know becomes illegal and managed by paramilitary groups? All of written history gives you the answer!

Every school has lock-down policies. Every person in the United States, according to

the same man who created and handed all power in this nation to himself via NSPD-51, says we all have to be evaluated for mental illness. You're a lunatic if you're a Christian. You're a lunatic if you're a Patriotic American. You're a lunatic if you question the wars. You're a lunatic if you think or live according to the laws of the Constitution. You're a lunatic if you refuse to take Big Pharma drugs. You're a lunatic if you choose to take supplements. You're a lunatic if you are straight and monogamous. You're a lunatic if you want to have children. You're a lunatic if you prefer marriage to hooking up. You're a lunatic if you question global warming. You're a lunatic if you question the mental health systems in your schools. You're a lunatic if you're overweight. And you're a lunatic criminal if you smoke cigarettes, don't wear seat belts, can't afford to get your property up to new "international codes," or drive cars.

And then, there is biotechnology waiting in the wings to "fix" your flaws – to make you "desirable" – to and for the pathological elites in charge. Welcome to academic and DNA-based eugenics. Welcome to designer and assigned babies. Welcome to permission slips to breed. Welcome to indoor farming. Welcome, "citizens," to Martial Law. If in doubt, ask the NAU regional King in charge of it ALL and his 2-Party army. I suppose when we're mostly a homeless population, sick with designer diseases, and crazed in the streets, the labor camps will look pretty good to us.

So, exactly how long are you going to deny the neon flashing lights on the walls??? What does it take for the 300 million of us to indivisibly demand that "government," as it now stands armed and against US, cease and desist?

If she says so, it must be the case – don't hold anything back, now. Does she have Blackwater in mind? Haven't decided whose side she's on except her own. Don't believe everything you read, he/she could be lying or misinformed. Yes, that applies to what I write – I lie a lot – I write fiction. However, even with Medicare part D insurance, I couldn't afford to buy my drugs before coming to Arkansas. This article was courtesy of Steve Quayle, so, it can't be biased in any way, shape or form. OTOH, he's posted the same survival tip for at least 2 months before the net went down.

Can't talk right now. We got to get our butts out there and sweep off the ash. If it rains water, the ash will get so heavy, the roofs might fall in. Don't have any idea where it's coming from, yet. All that ash in the air causes a lot of static electricity and our radio reception sucks. No I've never met Monica, why do you ask? Isn't word association fun? By the way, Hitlerly couldn't spell any better than Dan Quayle.

Me? I voted for John. He didn't want to get the guns. What do you mean he wasn't on the ballot? We didn't know how Hitlerly had died, no one did. Majority speculation on the radio net was that her plane crashed. Surely, if she were alive, she'd have come forward to prevent Osama Obama from being sworn in as the new President. John Kennedy's body was barely cold before LBJ was sworn in. Is that a thing with Democrats? OTOH, she started her inaugural address with, "I've loved two women in my life..." Someone should tell Bill, "Payback is a bitch." (Mel Gibson, right?)

As is always the case what you're reading is a mix of fact and fiction. My job is to blend them so you do something like look up the White Silence at Wiki. Go ahead, I did, it isn't there because that's fiction. Russ looked up Youbetcha Ranch, with the same results. This work is another collaboration, father/son.

About 4 weeks into the ash fall, as it began to lessen, the static also began to lessen allowing us to reach out and ask, "Duh, what happened?"

I picked up a ham from Reno, and he said he hadn't seen a thing. I tried to reach the guy 80 miles east of Yellowstone, but didn't have his call sign or know which bands he frequented. Albuquerque had been nuked and I didn't even try there. So far, all we knew was something big had erupted. We eliminated about half the calderas, they weren't in the lower 48 or were full of water.

We were curious, but not curious enough to go look. That left one option, measure the depth of the ash. We averaged about 6cm, ~2¼". They hosed it off the plants then used blowers to dry the plants. Joe claimed they saved over 90% of the garden and crops. Extra manure was secured and composted and when the harvest ended the compost, ash and plant remains were plowed under.

In some ways, it was like being in New Orleans just after the levees broke. We didn't need help, but others did and it was beyond our means to provide for everyone. Derek was demoted to the highest enlisted rank in the Army, save one, Command Sergeant Major. The only higher rank in the Army is Command Sergeant Major of the Army, but both are E-9s. You may ask if officers aren't higher ranking and I'd have to admit they are. OTOH we all know who REALLY runs the Army. The same applies to the ANG.

Because of his temporary status as a Major General, he got a reasonable amount of respect from the officer community. His new enlisted rank was permanent and that Governor liked Derek so the officers decided not to screw with him. They had him brief them so they could get up to speed. It was simply a case of the Governor giveth and the Governor taketh away. Blessed be the name of... nah, he's a Democrat.

If we ever have a 2nd Civil War, it won't be North vs. South; it will be Republicans vs. Democrats. I could be wrong, it could be conservatives vs. liberals, but that's so one sided. And, rather leave you out of the loop, it was Yellowstone that blew up in an explosion about the size of the Lava Creek eruption of 1,000km³ (240mi³). Lava Creek was the name of the one 640,000 years ago.

Ronald and I were getting old. We concluded that we didn't need to worry about passing on our values to the kids, grandkids and one great grandchild. It was winter now, the fields had been plowed but not disked, they'd do that in the spring when they did the final soil preparation.

For their part, Ron and Linda made one final trip to Cedar Hill. It was on that trip that he picked up the information on Yellowstone. It was quiet the three weeks they were gone

and I almost didn't expect him to come back. He said he wanted to stay and would have, had not they gotten so much ash. I told Derek and Damon that I'd done my bit and wanted to write a new story to chronicle these events.

"Can you remember it all?"

"Yeah, I took notes."

Looking back at what happened and how we managed to get through it, one thing stands out: the more money you have, the better you can prepare. However, I had managed to create a shelter in my backyard in Palmdale, just like I frequently wrote. It wasn't fancy, but it was built to withstand an overpressure of 25psi. It was shielded by 10' of earth, the recommended amount. It would have served if we hadn't come to Arkansas.

Odds are that if we hadn't come to Arkansas, Ron and Linda might not have moved to Cedar Hill. That would have left us at the mercy the San Andreas and those Mexicans, Chinese and Central Americans. We never went back, so I can't tell you how Palmdale turned out, just that the invaders eventually left.

As far as our stay here went, I made notes, but they were far too concise to be of value to a man who has memory problems. My first estimate was that it would take 300 pages to relate the tale. I did it in half of that because of my poor memory. No doubt I left unanswered questions, but it's up to the reader to fill in the blanks.

Perhaps my point was, as always, it's not if, but when and what. I thought it important to point out that my earlier story, *The Cold War* was absolutely correct when I claimed that *the cold war never ended, it just changed character*. China aided Mexico, but with the number of troops they have, that didn't keep them from seizing Taiwan shortly after Russia attacked us.

In terms of winners and losers, everyone loses in a war, some more than others. Those people who were vaporized in a blast probably made out best, they were dead before they knew anything happened. We were the in between group with the bottom group being the people who died of radiation sickness and various diseases because they either didn't know any better or were simply unprepared.

When people prepare, they have to think long term. Vacuum packed dry pasta will be good for 10,000 years while canned goods will be lucky to make it 2 years. If you agree with me, buy the package from Shane Connor or something similar from someone else. Stock your shelves with things you can't grow or make afterwards. Example, meds, toilet paper, etc. They probably won't be importing and roasting coffee for some time.

If you have a problem justifying preparing, think of it as insurance. You have car insurance although you don't plan on having an accident. You have homeowners insurance

although you don't expect to lose your house. You have life insurance because you know you will eventually die and it could be expensive for those left behind.

When Fiction Becomes Fact – Epilog

Folgers got back online in only two months, but what if they hadn't? Would you have been forced to change brands? Unfortunately that assumes there's another brand to switch to. The grocery stores don't really have that large of a stock of food, usually about 3 days, because of just in time inventory practices.

It also occurs to me that Einstein was right in one sense. He was a sheeple and came here from a country where private ownership of firearms had been outlawed. His statement about clubs ignored the American spirit. If nothing else, buy a shotgun and a case of shells. If you need to use it for anything other than hunting, you can take their guns. Or, would you prefer to let Fleataxi's brigands rape your wife and daughter(s)?

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The nuclear powers will never give up their weapons. That's because they'll never trust the other side to give up theirs. Those weapons are here to stay until someone uses them, get used to it.

The current hurricane season could be one of the worst on record. Based on averages, we're overdue for many things, volcanoes, earthquakes, you name it. If Bush and Congress have their way we'll be turned into a third world country.

ATM, my primary preps consist of:

1 M1A Loaded w/ 2,000 rounds of SA surplus
1 M1A Super Match fully equipped
1 Package from KI4U plus 2 extra Dosimeters
4 extra bottles of KI
3 month supply of food
3 month supply of meds
1 PowerBOSS 7kw portable gasoline generator
1 positive attitude
750,000 computer files

I don't know when or what, but IF isn't a question. There are certainties including the fact that the Moon is slowly moving away from the Earth because of the energy lost when the Moon's gravity causes the tides. The only real question in my tired old mind is, "Will our downfall come from inside or outside?" The correct answer could be YES.

Another point, just because we have a GTW doesn't mean that natural events will stop happening. We'll still have avalanches, droughts, earthquakes, epidemics, famines, floods, hurricanes, landslides, thunderstorms, tornadoes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions and wildfires. In the aftermath of a GTW, some of those are certain to occur, for sure epidemics and famines.

If the Lord, in His infinite wisdom, grants me another 15 years, I could live to see it happen and will be able to say, "I told you so." If I have a means of communication, I'm just enough of an asshole to do it.

Have you seen 'Last Best Chance' starring Fred Dalton Thompson? Get it and watch it; then tell me I'm nuts!

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NATIONAL SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE/NSPD 51 HOMELAND SECURITY PRESIDENTIAL DIRECTIVE/HSPD-20

Subject: National Continuity Policy

Purpose

(1) This directive establishes a comprehensive national policy on the continuity of Federal Government structures and operations and a single National Continuity Coordinator responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of Federal continuity policies. This policy establishes "National Essential Functions," prescribes continuity requirements for all executive departments and agencies, and provides guidance for State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector organizations in order to ensure a comprehensive and integrated national continuity program that will enhance the credibility of our national security posture and enable a more rapid and effective response to and recovery from a national emergency.

Definitions

(2) In this directive:

(a) "Category" refers to the categories of executive departments and agencies listed in Annex A to this directive;

(b) "Catastrophic Emergency" means any incident, regardless of location, that results in extraordinary levels of mass casualties, damage, or disruption severely affecting the US population, infrastructure, environment, economy, or government functions;

(c) "Continuity of Government," or "COG," means a coordinated effort within the Federal Government's executive branch to ensure that National Essential Functions continue to be performed during a Catastrophic Emergency;

(d) "Continuity of Operations," or "COOP," means an effort within individual executive departments and agencies to ensure that Primary Mission-Essential Functions continue to be performed during a wide range of emergencies, including localized acts of nature, accidents, and technological or attack-related emergencies;

(e) "Enduring Constitutional Government," or "ECG," means a cooperative effort among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Federal Government, coordinated by the President, as a matter of comity with respect to the legislative and judicial branches and with proper respect for the constitutional separation of powers among the branches, to preserve the constitutional framework under which the Nation is governed and the capability of all three branches of government to execute constitutional responsibilities and provide for orderly succession, appropriate transition of leadership, and interoperability and support of the National Essential Functions during a catastrophic emergency;

(f) "Executive Departments and Agencies" means the executive departments enumerated in 5 USC 101, independent establishments as defined by 5 USC 104(1), Government corporations as defined by 5 USC 103(1), and the United States Postal Service;

(g) "Government Functions" means the collective functions of the heads of executive departments and agencies as defined by statute, regulation, presidential direction, or other legal authority, and the functions of the legislative and judicial branches;

(h) "National Essential Functions," or "NEFs," means that subset of Government Functions that are necessary to lead and sustain the Nation during a catastrophic emergency and that, therefore, must be supported through COOP and COG capabilities; and

(i) "Primary Mission Essential Functions," or "PMEFs," means those Government Functions that must be performed in order to support or implement the performance of NEFs before, during, and in the aftermath of an emergency.

Policy

(3) It is the policy of the United States to maintain a comprehensive and effective continuity capability composed of Continuity of Operations and Continuity of Government programs in order to ensure the preservation of our form of government under the Constitution and the continuing performance of National Essential Functions under all conditions.

Implementation Actions

(4) Continuity requirements shall be incorporated into daily operations of all executive departments and agencies. As a result of the asymmetric threat environment, adequate warning of potential emergencies that could pose a significant risk to the homeland might not be available, and therefore all continuity planning shall be based on the assumption that no such warning will be received. Emphasis will be placed upon geographic dispersion of leadership, staff, and infrastructure in order to increase survivability and maintain uninterrupted Government Functions. Risk management principles shall be applied to ensure that appropriate operational readiness decisions are based on the probability of an attack or other incident and its consequences.

(5) The following NEFs are the foundation for all continuity programs and capabilities and represent the overarching responsibilities of the Federal Government to lead and sustain the Nation during a crisis, and therefore sustaining the following NEFs shall be the primary focus of the Federal Government leadership during and in the aftermath of an emergency that adversely affects the performance of Government Functions:

(a) Ensuring the continued functioning of our form of government under the Constitution, including the functioning of the three separate branches of government;

(b) Providing leadership visible to the Nation and the world and maintaining the trust and confidence of the American people;

(c) Defending the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and preventing or interdicting attacks against the United States or its people, property, or interests;

(d) Maintaining and fostering effective relationships with foreign nations;

(e) Protecting against threats to the homeland and bringing to justice perpetrators of crimes or attacks against the United States or its people, property, or interests;

(f) Providing rapid and effective response to and recovery from the domestic consequences of an attack or other incident;

(g) Protecting and stabilizing the Nation's economy and ensuring public confidence in its financial systems; and

(h) Providing for critical Federal Government services that address the national health, safety, and welfare needs of the United States.

(6) The President shall lead the activities of the Federal Government for ensuring constitutional government. In order to advise and assist the President in that function, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (APHS/CT) is hereby designated as the National Continuity Coordinator. The National Continuity Coordinator, in coordination with the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (APNSA), without exercising directive authority, shall coordinate the development and implementation of continuity policy for executive departments and agencies. The Continuity Policy Coordination Committee (CPCC), chaired by a Senior Director from the Homeland Security Council staff, designated by the National Continuity Coordinator, shall be the main day-to-day forum for such policy coordination.

(7) For continuity purposes, each executive department and agency is assigned to a category in accordance with the nature and characteristics of its national security roles and responsibilities in support of the Federal Government's ability to sustain the NEFs. The Secretary of Homeland Security shall serve as the President's lead agent for coordinating overall continuity operations and activities of executive departments and agen-

cies, and in such role shall perform the responsibilities set forth for the Secretary in sections 10 and 16 of this directive.

(8) The National Continuity Coordinator, in consultation with the heads of appropriate executive departments and agencies, will lead the development of a National Continuity Implementation Plan (Plan), which shall include prioritized goals and objectives, a concept of operations, performance metrics by which to measure continuity readiness, procedures for continuity and incident management activities, and clear direction to executive department and agency continuity coordinators, as well as guidance to promote interoperability of Federal Government continuity programs and procedures with State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure, as appropriate. The Plan shall be submitted to the President for approval not later than 90 days after the date of this directive.

(9) Recognizing that each branch of the Federal Government is responsible for its own continuity programs, an official designated by the Chief of Staff to the President shall ensure that the executive branch's COOP and COG policies in support of ECG efforts are appropriately coordinated with those of the legislative and judicial branches in order to ensure interoperability and allocate national assets efficiently to maintain a functioning Federal Government.

(10) Federal Government COOP, COG, and ECG plans and operations shall be appropriately integrated with the emergency plans and capabilities of State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure, as appropriate, in order to promote interoperability and to prevent redundancies and conflicting lines of authority. The Secretary of Homeland Security shall coordinate the integration of Federal continuity plans and operations with State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector owners and operators of critical infrastructure, as appropriate, in order to provide for the delivery of essential services during an emergency.

(11) Continuity requirements for the Executive Office of the President (EOP) and executive departments and agencies shall include the following:

(a) The continuation of the performance of PMEFs during any emergency must be for a period up to 30 days or until normal operations can be resumed, and the capability to be fully operational at alternate sites as soon as possible after the occurrence of an emergency, but not later than 12 hours after COOP activation;

(b) Succession orders and pre-planned devolution of authorities that ensure the emergency delegation of authority must be planned and documented in advance in accordance with applicable law;

(c) Vital resources, facilities, and records must be safeguarded, and official access to them must be provided;

(d) Provision must be made for the acquisition of the resources necessary for continuity operations on an emergency basis;

(e) Provision must be made for the availability and redundancy of critical communications capabilities at alternate sites in order to support connectivity between and among key government leadership, internal elements, other executive departments and agencies, critical partners, and the public;

(f) Provision must be made for reconstitution capabilities that allow for recovery from a catastrophic emergency and resumption of normal operations; and

(g) Provision must be made for the identification, training, and preparedness of personnel capable of relocating to alternate facilities to support the continuation of the performance of PMEFs.

(12) In order to provide a coordinated response to escalating threat levels or actual emergencies, the Continuity of Government Readiness Conditions (COGCON) system establishes executive branch continuity program readiness levels, focusing on possible threats to the National Capital Region. The President will determine and issue the COGCON Level. Executive departments and agencies shall comply with the requirements and assigned responsibilities under the COGCON program. During COOP activation, executive departments and agencies shall report their readiness status to the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Secretary's designee.

(13) The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall:

(a) Conduct an annual assessment of executive department and agency continuity funding requests and performance data that are submitted by executive departments and agencies as part of the annual budget request process, in order to monitor progress in the implementation of the Plan and the execution of continuity budgets;

(b) In coordination with the National Continuity Coordinator, issue annual continuity planning guidance for the development of continuity budget requests; and

(c) Ensure that heads of executive departments and agencies prioritize budget resources for continuity capabilities, consistent with this directive.

(14) The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall:

(a) Define and issue minimum requirements for continuity communications for executive departments and agencies, in consultation with the APHS/CT, the APNSA, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Chief of Staff to the President;

(b) Establish requirements for, and monitor the development, implementation, and maintenance of, a comprehensive communications architecture to integrate continuity

components, in consultation with the APHS/CT, the APNSA, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Chief of Staff to the President; and

(c) Review quarterly and annual assessments of continuity communications capabilities, as prepared pursuant to section 16(d) of this directive or otherwise, and report the results and recommended remedial actions to the National Continuity Coordinator.

(15) An official designated by the Chief of Staff to the President shall:

(a) Advise the President, the Chief of Staff to the President, the APHS/CT, and the APNSA on COGCON operational execution options; and

(b) Consult with the Secretary of Homeland Security in order to ensure synchronization and integration of continuity activities among the four categories of executive departments and agencies.

(16) The Secretary of Homeland (I)Security shall:

(a) Coordinate the implementation, execution, and assessment of continuity operations and activities;

(b) Develop and promulgate Federal Continuity Directives in order to establish continuity planning requirements for executive departments and agencies;

(c) Conduct biennial assessments of individual department and agency continuity capabilities as prescribed by the Plan and report the results to the President through the APHS/CT;

(d) Conduct quarterly and annual assessments of continuity communications capabilities in consultation with an official designated by the Chief of Staff to the President;

(e) Develop, lead, and conduct a Federal continuity training and exercise program, which shall be incorporated into the National Exercise Program developed pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8 of December 17, 2003 ("National Preparedness"), in consultation with an official designated by the Chief of Staff to the President;

(f) Develop and promulgate continuity planning guidance to State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector critical infrastructure owners and operators;

(g) Make available continuity planning and exercise funding, in the form of grants as provided by law, to State, local, territorial, and tribal governments, and private sector critical infrastructure owners and operators; and

(h) As Executive Agent of the National Communications System, develop, implement, and maintain a comprehensive continuity communications architecture.

(17) The Director of National Intelligence, in coordination with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall produce a biennial assessment of the foreign and domestic threats to the Nation's continuity of government.

(18) The Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall provide secure, integrated, Continuity of Government communications to the President, the Vice President, and, at a minimum, Category I executive departments and agencies.

(19) Heads of executive departments and agencies shall execute their respective department or agency COOP plans in response to a localized emergency and shall:

(a) Appoint a senior accountable official, at the Assistant Secretary level, as the Continuity Coordinator for the department or agency;

(b) Identify and submit to the National Continuity Coordinator the list of PMEFs for the department or agency and develop continuity plans in support of the NEFs and the continuation of essential functions under all conditions;

(c) Plan, program, and budget for continuity capabilities consistent with this directive;

(d) Plan, conduct, and support annual tests and training, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, in order to evaluate program readiness and ensure adequacy and viability of continuity plans and communications systems; and

(e) Support other continuity requirements, as assigned by category, in accordance with the nature and characteristics of its national security roles and responsibilities

General Provisions

(20) This directive shall be implemented in a manner that is consistent with, and facilitates effective implementation of, provisions of the Constitution concerning succession to the Presidency or the exercise of its powers, and the Presidential Succession Act of 1947 (3 USC 19), with consultation of the Vice President and, as appropriate, others involved. Heads of executive departments and agencies shall ensure that appropriate support is available to the Vice President and others involved as necessary to be prepared at all times to implement those provisions.

(21) This directive:

(a) Shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and the authorities of agencies, or heads of agencies, vested by law, and subject to the availability of appropriations;

(b) Shall not be construed to impair or otherwise affect (i) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, and legislative proposals, or (ii) the authority of the Secretary of Defense over the Department of De-

fense, including the chain of command for military forces from the President, to the Secretary of Defense, to the commander of military forces, or military command and control procedures; and

(c) Is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

(22) Revocation. Presidential Decision Directive 67 of October 21, 1998 ("Enduring Constitutional Government and Continuity of Government Operations"), including all Annexes thereto, is hereby revoked.

(23) Annex A and the classified Continuity Annexes, attached hereto, are hereby incorporated into and made a part of this directive.

(24) Security. This directive and the information contained herein shall be protected from unauthorized disclosure, provided that, except for Annex A, the Annexes attached to this directive are classified and shall be accorded appropriate handling, consistent with applicable Executive Orders.

/s/ GEORGE W. BUSH

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If George thought it was going to happen, why don't you?

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